

How Will Large Reductions in the Internal Revenue Service's Funding and Staffing Affect Taxpayers?

Speaker Biographies

Alex Brill is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he studies the impact of tax policy on the US economy as well as the fiscal, economic, and political consequences of tax, budget, health care, retirement security, and trade policies. He also works on health care reform, pharmaceutical spending and drug innovation, and unemployment insurance reform. Brill is the editor of *Carbon Tax Policy: A Conservative Dialogue on Pro-Growth Opportunities* (2017) and the coauthor, with Alan D. Viard, of *The Real Tax Burden: More Than Dollars and Cents* (2011). He has testified numerous times before Congress on tax policy, labor markets and unemployment insurance, Social Security reform, fiscal stimulus, the manufacturing sector, and biologic drug competition. Before joining AEI, Brill served as the policy director and chief economist of the House Ways and Means Committee. Previously, he served on the staff of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. He has also served on the staff of the President's Fiscal Commission (Simpson-Bowles) and the Republican Platform Committee (2008). Brill has an MA in mathematical finance from Boston University and a BA in economics from Tufts University.

Kimberly Clausing is the Eric M. Zolt Chair in Tax Law and Policy at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law, and she is a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. During the first part of the Biden Administration, Dr. Clausing was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tax Analysis in the US Department of the Treasury, serving as the lead economist in the Office of Tax Policy. Professor Clausing's research examines how government decisions and corporate behavior interplay in the global economy. She has published numerous articles on taxation, climate policy, and international trade, and she is the author of *Open: The Progressive Case for Free Trade, Immigration, and Global Capital* (Harvard University Press, 2019). Dr. Clausing is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. She has testified before the U.S. Congress on many occasions, and she has received two Fulbright Research awards as well as many external research grants. Professor Clausing received her Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University in 1996.

Howard Gleckman is a senior fellow in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where he edits the fiscal policy blog *TaxVox* and the daily news summary *The Daily Deduction*. He is also affiliated with Urban's Program on Retirement Policy, where he works on long-term care issues. Before joining Urban, Gleckman was senior correspondent in the Washington bureau of *Business Week*, where he was a 2003 National Magazine Award finalist. He was a 2006–07 media fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation and a visiting fellow at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College from 2006 to 2008. Gleckman writes two regular columns for *Forbes.com*, on tax policy and elder care. He is author of the book *Caring for Our Parents* and speaks and writes frequently on long-term care issues. (*Panel 2 moderator*)

Tracy Gordon is co-director and the acting Robert C. Pozen director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, where she researches and writes about fiscal challenges facing state and local governments, including budget trade-offs, intergovernmental relations, and long-term sustainability. Before joining Urban, Gordon was a senior economist with the White House Council of Economic Advisers. She was also a fellow at the Brookings Institution, assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, and fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. Gordon was a member of the District of Columbia Infrastructure Task Force and the District of Columbia Tax Revision Commission. She serves on

the board of trustees for the American Tax Policy Institute and the California Budget and Policy Center. Gordon has written extensively on state and local government finances, including taxes, budgeting, intergovernmental relations, municipal debt, and pensions. She has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* and on C-SPAN, Fox Business News, and NPR. Gordon holds a PhD in public policy with a concurrent MA in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Daniel E. Ho is the William Benjamin Scott and Luna M. Scott Professor of Law, Professor of Political Science, Professor of Computer Science (by courtesy), Senior Fellow at Stanford's Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research at Stanford University. He is a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and is Director of the Regulation, Evaluation, and Governance Lab (RegLab). Ho serves on the National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee (NAIAC), advising the White House on artificial intelligence, as Senior Advisor on Responsible AI at the U.S. Department of Labor, and as a Public Member of the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS). He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He received his J.D. from Yale Law School and Ph.D. from Harvard University and clerked for Judge Stephen F. Williams on the U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit.

Janet Holtzblatt is a senior fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. Over a three-decade career in the federal government, she worked on a broad range of tax policy issues, with emphasis on the tax treatment of families and workers, health reform, the administration of the tax code, and tax simplification. Holtzblatt's research has focused on the earned income tax credit, marriage penalties and bonuses in the income tax system, the administration of health reform through the tax system, labor market effects of health reform, and the impact of Internal Revenue Service resources on revenues. She has also directed studies on the tax treatment of multinationals, corporate tax rates, pass-through entities, marginal tax rates, and federal assistance for higher education. Holtzblatt has served on the board of directors for the National Tax Association. In 2017, she received the Referee of the Year Award from the *National Tax Journal*. She was the recipient of the 2020 Davie-Davis Public Service Award, which is bestowed annually by the National Tax Association. Before joining Urban, Holtzblatt was the unit chief for tax policy studies in the Tax Analysis Division of the Congressional Budget Office. Before that, she was deputy director of the Individual Taxation Division in the US Treasury Office of Tax Analysis and a senior analyst on the Senate Budget Committee. She earned her bachelor's degree in economics and history from the University of Illinois and a doctoral degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin. (*Panel 1 moderator*)

Barry Johnson is a Non-Resident Fellow in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. His research focuses on expanding access to data for evidence building, improving the quality and utility of administrative data for statistical uses, protecting data confidentiality, and measuring distributions of income and wealth. His recent work includes developing new tiers of researcher data access, including synthetic tax data and methods for producing an automated, privacy-preserving validation server. He has also assisted with the planning for a National Secure Data Service. Before joining Urban, Barry was the Chief Data and Analytics Officer at the Internal Revenue Service, the Director of the IRS Statistics of Income Division, and the Statistical Official for the Department of the Treasury. He is a fellow of the American Statistical Association and a recipient of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. In 2024, he received the National Tax Association's Davie-Davis Public Service Award. He holds a bachelor's degree in finance and economics with honors from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in economics from The American University.

Nina E. Olson is the Executive Director of the Center for Taxpayer Rights, a nonprofit that works to advance taxpayer rights in the United States and internationally. Among other initiatives, the Center organizes and convenes the International Conference on Taxpayer Rights, and operates the Low Income

Taxpayer Clinic Support Center. From March 2001 to July 2019, Nina served as the National Taxpayer Advocate of the United States, an independent organization within the Internal Revenue Service with 1,600 to 2,100 employees and 79 offices across the US, dedicated to assisting taxpayers resolve their problems with the IRS and making administrative and legislative recommendations to mitigate those problems systemically. She has submitted 39 annual reports to Congress, and testified before congressional committees over 65 times. Before serving as the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina founded and directed The Community Tax Law Project, the first independent Low Income Taxpayer Clinic in the US. She also maintained a private legal practice, representing taxpayers in disputes with the IRS. Nina has received many awards and recognitions, including the American Bar Association Section of Taxation's Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Service and the Administrative Law Section's Outstanding Government Service Award. The University of Pittsburgh Tax Review dedicated its 2020 issue to her work in the field of taxation. Nina is a member of the Virginia state bar, a fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel (ACTC), a senior fellow of the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS), and a member of the supervisory board of the International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation (IBFD) Observatory of Taxpayer Rights. Nina received her LLM in Taxation from Georgetown University Law Center, her JD from North Carolina Central University School of Law, and her AB (in fine arts) from Bryn Mawr College.

Pete Sepp is the president of the National Tax Payers Union. As president of the organization, Sepp leads the non-profit, non-partisan National Taxpayers Union's (NTU's) government affairs, public relations, and development activities. Pete also oversees strategic planning for NTU and its staff, and supervises the research and educational operations of the National Taxpayers Union Foundation (NTUF). In 2023 NTUF founded Taxpayers for IRS Transformation to convene former IRS officials, academics, and policy experts to offer the IRS guidance on its spending plans. Since beginning his service with NTU in 1988, Pete has written and edited numerous policy papers, informational publications, and activist manuals, as well as studies on topics such as Congressional perquisites, citizen-initiated tax revolts, antitrust and competition regulation, and Pentagon spending. He has testified before Congress on matters ranging from Government- Sponsored Enterprises in lending to Medicare and federal pension reforms. He has lectured in the U.S. and abroad on tax administration reform. His first lobbying project was the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights of 1988. He has since worked on the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act and successor proposals, such as the Taxpayer First Act and the current Taxpayer Assistance and Service Act discussion draft. In February, he testified before the Oversight Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee on the topic of IRS modernization. Pete graduated cum laude from Webster University in St. Louis, MO with a degree in History and Political Science. Before coming to NTU, Sepp served with the St. Louis County Board of Elections and with a U.S. Senate campaign.

Phil West is senior counsel at Steptoe and is widely regarded as one of the premier international tax lawyers in the United States. Formerly Steptoe's global chairman, he is a trusted adviser to major multinationals, high-net-worth individuals, and governments on international tax issues, and often achieves exceptional results for clients in complex and high-profile tax controversies; legislative, regulatory, ruling, and competent authority proceedings; transactions; and other matters. He advises clients on both technical questions and issues of broad policy significance, and has served as an expert witness in major tax controversies involving taxpayers around the world. Drawing on four decades of private sector and public service experience, including in the Treasury Department, as the U.S. government's most senior international tax law and policy official, he is regularly called on to advise clients and government officials alike with respect to sensitive and complex tax matters, and often assumes responsibility for defusing, and then resolving, matters with taxing authorities that have become needlessly adversarial. Mr. West has testified before Congress several times on international tax matters. At the Treasury Department, Mr. West played a central role in virtually every policy, legislative, and regulatory development in the international tax area. He led tax treaty negotiations, discussions, and ratification efforts involving



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countries throughout the world, and led the U.S. tax work at the OECD. He has practical experience with many foreign tax systems and good relationships with tax officials and private practitioners around the world. Chambers, The Legal 500, and other rankings consistently place him in the top tier of international tax practitioners.

Vanessa Williamson is a senior fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings, and a senior fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. She studies taxation and democracy in America. Her forthcoming book, “The Price of Democracy,” reveals the revolutionary power of taxation in American history (Basic Books, September 2025). She is also the author of “Read My Lips: Why Americans Are Proud to Pay Taxes,” and, with Harvard professor Theda Skocpol, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism.” She has written on school segregation, tax opinion, and tax politics in the Washington Post; about the Tea Party, anti-union legislation and voter registration at income tax filing in the New York Times; about taxpayer citizenship in the Atlantic; about philanthropy and austerity and white supremacy in Dissent; and about democracy and organizing for Teen Vogue. She has discussed her research on NPR’s “Marketplace”, C-SPAN’s “Washington Journal”, CNN’s “Fareed Zakaria GPS”, CNBC’s “Squawk Box”, and MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show.” She received her Ph.D. in social policy from Harvard University.