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Congressman Smith Introduces Bills to Rein in Unaccountable Federal Agency Spending

JUNE 23RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Smith Bill's would no longer allow Agencies to Spend the fines, levies, penalties they are assessing taxpayers

Washington, D.C.- Today, Congressman Jason Smith introduced two pieces of legislation to rein in government federal agencies ability to spend fines, fees, settlements and penalties they are levying on American taxpayers.

H.R. 5551, the End EPA Rouge Spending Act, introduced by Rep Smith prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from spending any fine, private settlement, penalty or fee they collect. Rep Smith introduced the bill in response to the fact that while Congress has decreased the EPA's budget by 21% since 2010 , the EPA continues to find other avenues to generate new resources to spend, namely by attacking hardworking taxpayers with new and more aggressive penalties. This bill continues Smith's fight against harmful EPA regulations. In 2015 Smith introduced the END EPA Advertising Act to stop the EPA from using taxpayer money to hire public relations contractors. He also lead a bi-partisan letter in 2014 sent to the EPA's Administrator Gina McCarthy asking for an extension for people affected by the EPA's new rule on emission standards for existing power plants. Additionally, Smith has worked to defund harmful regulations the EPA has authored such as the burdensome and costly Waters of the United States rule.

“The EPA is an agency out of control. They profit off the lives of hardworking folks in Missouri through outrageous fines and fees. These fees then sit in a slush fund where

unelected bureaucrats can spend the money how they see fit,’ Smith said. “My bill would help rein in this agency and restore the true power of the purse to the people’s representatives in Congress.”

Congressman Smith, along with his colleague Congressman Gary Palmer of Alabama, also co-introduced H.R. 5499, the Agency Accountability Act. Like the EPA many other agencies have the authority to collect fines, fees, and other revenues outside of appropriated funds. These funds are then used to offset cuts in these agencies’ budgets which Congress has made. According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the federal government collected \$516 billion in user fees alone in 2015. This has led to many agencies being unaccountable for certain acts and has substantially limited congressional oversight.

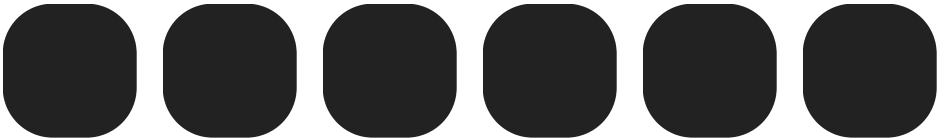
The Agency Accountability Act would remove the incentive for agencies to continue to increase fines, fees, penalties and other assessments and put the control back in the hands of elected representatives and the American taxpayer.

After it was uncovered that the IRS was using a slush fund of \$500 million of taxpayer dollars without Congressional approval, Smith introduced his IRS OWES Act in April that was passed by the House with bi-partisan support that gives the Article I power back to Congress. Article I of the U.S. Constitution grants the people, through their elected representatives in Congress, the power of the purse, not federal agencies.

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