

# Minuteman Indivisible

## TALKING POINTS

### Presidential Tax Transparency

- **Facts (real ones, not fake)**
  - Candidate Trump said that he would release his taxes. He has not.
  - Current disclosure rules do not require public disclosure of tax returns but for 40 years, presidents have voluntarily released their taxes. President Trump has not.
  - Even a portion of Trump's tax returns could show the American people [some limited information about the billionaire's finances](#). The top two pages of his 1040 and his Schedule A, would reveal how much taxable income he made, how much he paid in taxes, his charitable contributions and whether he paid tax to any foreign governments.
  - This is a bipartisan issue. 73% of registered voters think that President Trump should release his taxes for public review. 64 % of Republicans want President Trump to publically release his taxes.

- **Is there any historical background to something like this?**

The custom of releasing tax returns began with Richard Nixon. In 1973, while under audit and amid controversy, Nixon released his returns. Upon releasing the taxes, Nixon stated "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I am not a crook."

- **Why does this matter:**

- Americans want transparency with the office of the Presidency. Americans deserve to know that the president is working for them vs his corporations or business interests.
- With the mounting evidence that there was foreign influence in our election, very possibly in partnership with members of the Trump campaign, Americans deserve to examine the tax returns and know if there is evidence of collusion.
- If President Trump is going to overhaul the tax code then US taxpayers deserve to know how those tax changes will affect him and his family personally. Taxpayers want a more level playing field - we want to know who benefits from the tax changes.
- The IRS manual makes it clear: Individual income tax returns for the president and vice president "are subject to mandatory examinations". But just as was voiced in Nixon's day, how can people trust the IRS to truly investigate the President when he's their boss?
- Congressional committees that set tax policy have the power to examine tax returns and Rep Bill Pascrell introduced an amendment

that would have triggered a request for the tax returns from the Treasury Department but it was blocked by the Republicans on the committee. Who is protecting the average American taxpayer? Note: see the Atlantic reference for an analysis of the Republicans that blocked the request.

- **Links to articles / information**

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/18/opinion/mr-trump-plays-by-his-own-rules-or-no-rules.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-left-region&region=opinion-c-col-left-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-left-region>
- <http://money.cnn.com/2017/01/23/news/economy/donald-trump-tax-returns/>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/02/these-23-republicans-passed-on-a-chance-to-get-trumps-tax-returns/516768/>
- <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/010317%20Presidential%20Tax%20Transparency%20Act%20One%20Pager.pdf>
- <http://katherineclark.house.gov/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=F00349D4-A28B-46B3-A42E-DA7F3202A7ED>
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/politics/2017/03/23/growing-movement-would-force-presidential-candidates-release-tax-returns/sISB9vW3JrYylySN8nRJUN/story.html>
- 

- **Related Legislation or lawsuits:**

- S.26 Presidential Tax Transparency Act.
- H.R.305 Presidential Tax Transparency Act.
- MA State Senator Michael Barrett's Bill (S.365) would make the release of candidate tax returns a requirement for appearing on the Massachusetts primary ballot. Note: this is also happening in other states but there is some discussion about whether this is constitutional or not.
- The New York City Council is introducing a measure that would require a narrowly defined group of city concession contractors to disclose the tax documents of their executives in order to remain eligible for city contracts. This rule would require Trump to release his taxes in order to keep operating a golf course on a city-owned property.
- Democrats vow to block the tax reform bill until President Trump releases his taxes.

- **Key "allies" for the issue:**

- Media outlets
- MA MoCs
- The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics (CREW) in Washington, a government watchdog group.
- ACLU
- Robert Reich

- **Our response / actions:**

- Support MA S.365