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Hillary Emails v. Trump Tax Returns

Hillary isn't the only one wanting those big, really excellent tax returns. Senator Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, wants them. So does Mitt Romney, and just about everyone else. Releasing tax returns is a feature of every presidential election. The English are more private, yet as Prime Minister David Cameron recently learned via his Panama Papers connection, taxes are not to be trifled with in any country.

Still, handing over tax returns can make even candidates uneasy. Some tax return summaries (think Rubio and Cruz) tell us little. And Mr. Trump has raised eyebrows over his IRS audit excuse for withholding his. Even so, no one has said that Trump is legally *required* to turn them over. It is just *customary*. In contrast, most people agree that Mrs. Clinton violated State Department policies. That wasn't illegal.



Yet in the 'cover up worse than the crime' department, it appears that she thereafter contravened federal record-keeping rules. Of course, the Team

Hillary handling of the report's putative vindication of the Secretary of State is pretty good too. Yet few think anything will happen to her as a result. And Hillary has suggested that [Trump is downright dangerous](#). It surely isn't Trump's tax returns they are worried about.

Yet the move to go from the customary etiquette of releasing tax returns v. a legal mandate is afoot. The Presidential Tax Transparency Act [here](#) would take care of Trump's refusal to release his tax returns. The bill would *require* Trump to hand over his tax returns. If he doesn't, the U.S. Treasury Secretary *will* hand them over. He doesn't do what we want? Let's change the law.

It makes you wonder if any Republicans might try to force *Hillary* to hand something over too. Of course, Trump has such a rough road with his own party heavyweights that he is unlikely to get any support there. Oddly, that could give Trump more legitimacy as an outsider targeted by Washington insiders. The Senate's attempt to alter the sandbox takes a page from the convention playbook that suggest [delegates should actually abstain from voting](#) if Trump fails to produce the tax returns. Trump's outsider status gets better and better with each one of these moves.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Clinton's talk of Trump's taxes has made her sound weirdly like Mitt Romney. Trump is unapologetic about paying as little as he can, and he calls out the vast waste rampant in government. He [highlighted the \\$4 billion in IRS refunds to illegals](#), and [the IRS, encouraging illegals to steal Social Security Numbers](#). Trump says that if he were President, simplifying the tax code would be a domestic priority.

Like the Senate's attempt to make Trump produce his tax returns, Trump may actually be helped, not hurt, by [Romney saying that not releasing taxes is 'disqualifying'](#). Some voters will care about Trump's taxes, some will not. And separately, some will be bothered by Trump's shifting explanations and morphing views. Trump said in [an interview](#) that he did not plan to release his returns before the general election. But then he revised his pledge to say that he would [release the tax returns after his audit](#). Then, he has [said](#) about his tax rate is none of your business, and more.

Hillary has had a few shifting explanations of her emails and private server, too. Voters will have to decide if Trump's tax speak or Hillary's email speak are more worrisome.

For alerts to future tax articles, email me at Wood@WoodLLP.com. This discussion is not legal advice.