

The abuse - not stupidity - reason to resign

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Phil Hart should resign from the Idaho legislature.

Of course we know that is not going to happen. But at the very least he should offer a substitute to serve in his place until he has paid his state tax bill in full. That won't happen either. Instead Rep. Hart will continue to serve in the legislature despite the fact he owes the state a bundle in overdue taxes.

Which makes this screed as fruitless as n well, fighting the government with some bogus claims about the Constitution and income taxes.

That's not to say Rep. Hart did not have every right to squabble with the IRS. If that is how he wants to expend his energy and consume his free time, then he should have at `er.

Which is what Rep. Hart decided.

He employed the Constitution n or at least his version of it - to battle with the IRS under the guise of fighting the federal behemoth for patriotic Americans everywhere.

Stupid?

Sure.

Despite that there is never a shortage of wingnuts who confuse their disagreement with the income tax with patriotism.

But it is quite another thing altogether for an elected official to abuse the power of office.

The fact the legislator from Athol picked this losing fight with the IRS says more about his lack of common sense than anything. The courts have consistently and repeatedly ruled the income tax is Constitutional - no matter how many grifters tour the country selling books that claim otherwise.

With even a cursory review, Rep. Hart would have learned that it is a fool's errand to claim otherwise. But he didn't have the savvy to do that and now, a few years later, he has turned his life upside down.

But simply because Phil Hart acted foolishly is not reason enough he should resign from the Idaho House of Representatives. Phil Hart should resign because he abused the power of the office.

As a consequence with his fight with the IRS, Rep. Hart owes the state of Idaho a bunch of money in back taxes. Taxes the state expects him to pay like, well, you know n common folk. Like mere taxpayers who do not serve in the legislature and are expected to comply with the law.

But Rep. Hart claims the IRS, and consequently the state, have it all wrong. He doesn't owe as much as they claim. He has an explanation for this which may, or may not, wash n but at first glance certainly seems contrived.

But it doesn't matter.

Phil Hart used the privilege of his office to fend off an order by the State Tax Commission that he pay the \$53,000 the state says he owes. While technically he may be allowed to delay n maybe n it was an abuse of the authority voters granted him.

Rep. Hart brought this on himself. If he wants to fight with the IRS, fine. But he should pay what the state says he owes. He can continue his fight over the amount after his check clears n just like the rest of us.

Instead he used his office to abuse the system. For that reason, he should resign - or be invited by his party to leave. n Dan Hammes