

April 24, 2023

Letter sent to members of the Americans Abroad Caucus

Re: Dear 535 Campaign

Dear Representative,

Millions of Americans live abroad. They have left the U.S. for many reasons, such as to be with a life partner, to study or to follow a job opportunity. Some retirees move to a place with a more affordable cost of living. Contrary to stereotype, most Americans abroad are of modest or moderate incomes. They retain links to the United States through family, property, voting, taxation, businesses, retirement plans and banking and investment accounts.

But, for many, their dreams, professional prospects and even love stories end up in distress.

They face legal and regulatory incompatibilities that result in unfair taxation, impediments to their retirement planning and loss of their investment and bank accounts. They have high compliance costs, lack of local job opportunities, the inability to run small businesses, and so on. That translates into stress, fear and worry. *"When is this nightmare ending?"* Family relationships are affected. For some the only solution is a painful and expensive renunciation of citizenship. *"It breaks my heart!"*

Many feel neglected: *"I think they don't have any understanding of the problems we must deal with"* and *"I feel that the US doesn't care about me except to view me as a criminal."*

Our two organizations, SEAT and AARO, which advocate for Americans overseas, asked respondents in two recent surveys to comment on their lives abroad. We received thousands of heartfelt and emotional responses, some of which you see above. In this "Dear 535 Campaign," we are sending each of you in Congress some of this testimony from your constituents.¹ Please see the next page. Each set of comments is different so we invite you to look at your colleagues' comments for a fuller picture.

Overseas Americans do not demand privilege or special treatment; they only ask to live ordinary lives like resident Americans. But many cannot due to laws, regulations and practices that fail to respect the American values of equal protection and due process. Eliminating the burdens and discriminatory treatment due to non-residence may be a challenge, but it can be done.

Thank you for being a member of the bipartisan Americans Abroad Caucus. We encourage you to continue to support the legal reforms necessary to allow overseas Americans to live ordinary lives. You will continue to hear from us about the problems faced by Americans abroad.

Sincerely,

Doris L. Speer
President
Association of Americans Resident Overseas

Laura Snyder
President
Stop Extraterritorial American Taxation

¹ A few of you also have comments from voters of other States.

About the organizations:

The Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO) is an international, non-partisan association with members from over 40 States living in 36 countries that seeks fair treatment for Americans abroad by advocating the issues that negatively affect their lives. AARO also informs its members of their rights and responsibilities as American citizens.

AARO's survey of its members and other expatriates asked questions on the following topics relevant to expatriates: The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), banking, investment and retirement accounts, taxation, Social Security, Medicare, voting, U.S. citizen services, passport renunciation and representation in Congress. Several articles reporting on the results of AARO's survey can be accessed by copying and pasting the following link:
<https://aaro.org/issues/2020-advocacy-survey>

AARO's website is: <https://aaro.org/>
AARO can be contacted at: contact@aaro.org

Stop Extraterritorial American Taxation (SEAT) is an independent, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to provide an educational platform about the effects of U.S. extraterritorial taxation.

SEAT's survey, open to current and former U.S. citizens and green card holders as well as their spouses and partners living outside the United States. was conducted to better understand the effects of the extraterritorial application of U.S. taxation and banking policies on persons living overseas. SEAT's full survey report can be accessed by copying and pasting the following link:
http://seatnow.org/survey_report_intro_page/

SEAT's website is: <http://seatnow.org/>
SEAT can be contacted at: info@seatnow.org