

## IRS Oversight Board

---

---

---

January 30, 2012

Media Contact:

Joelle Jordan 202-288-3241

### **IRS Oversight Board Releases its 2011 Taxpayer Attitude Survey; Vast Majority of Taxpayers Find Cheating on Taxes Unacceptable**

(Washington, DC) The *IRS Oversight Board Taxpayer Attitude Survey 2011* was released today, and showed that the great majority of those surveyed continues to find cheating on taxes unacceptable.

According to the survey, a large majority of the general public express strong support for compliance with the federal tax code. Eighty-four percent of those surveyed feel that it is “not at all acceptable to cheat on one’s income taxes” – down three points, reversing a three-point increase from the previous year.

Only six percent believe that cheating “a little here and there” is acceptable. But the percentage of taxpayers who think it is acceptable to cheat “as much as possible” has increased to eight percent in 2011. Nonetheless, tolerance for tax cheating continues to be widely viewed as unacceptable.

Other highlights from the survey show that:

#### *Paying taxes is viewed as a civic duty; accountability for cheaters is strongly favored*

The vast majority of taxpayers – 72 percent – “completely agree” that “it’s every American’s civic duty to pay their fair share of taxes.” The figure is up three percent from last year. Sixty-six percent “completely agree” that “everyone who cheats on their taxes should be held accountable.” This figure is three points below from last year’s survey.

#### *Integrity remains the top reason to pay, while fear of an audit is down*

Taxpayers continue to take a strongly ethical stance on paying taxes. Eighty-nine percent say that their “personal integrity” has a “great deal of influence” or is “somewhat of an influence” on whether they report and pay their taxes honestly. Meanwhile, third-party reporting of financial information to the IRS influences 65 percent (37 percent are influenced “a great deal,” with 28 percent by “somewhat of an influence”). Fear of an audit remains the third most important incentive to pay; down five points from last year to 59 percent.

#### *The IRS toll-free number and IRS website lead as important services*

The importance of IRS services to the public remains very strong. This year, 90 percent of taxpayers feel the IRS toll-free phone service is “very” or “somewhat” important, while 89 percent respond the same way regarding the IRS web site. Taxpayers also feel it is “very” or “somewhat” important to be able to file tax returns electronically (88 percent) and visit an office and meet with an IRS representative (86 percent) and meet with an IRS representative.

The results contained in *IRS Oversight Board Taxpayer Attitude Survey 2011* are based on interviews conducted in August 2011 by GfK Custom Research North America. The margin of error on weighted data is +/-3 percent for the full sample.

For the complete the complete survey and methodology, go to [www.irsoversightboard.treas.gov/reports](http://www.irsoversightboard.treas.gov/reports).

###