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After nearly 40 years living abroad (American, Belgian spouse) I discovered that I was "delinquent" in tax declarations to the US government. I'd just assumed that, living in a country (Belgium) where I worked, declared and paid taxes, it wasn't necessary to do so in a country where I did not reside or receive any services (infrastructure, schooling,).

Then began a financial nightmare which I am still undergoing, simply in order to become "compliant". This compliance has cost me: \$1499 (Streamlined procedure), \$3000+ (added complex impossible-to-understand forms and calculations that are only required for US expats - and heavily taxed by the IRS - for overseas investments that are considered standard overseas and are already taxed here). Add the \$48 for printing (300+ pages) and \$44 (UPS), I paid about \$4900 simply to become compliant (declarations for 3 years, FBARs for 6, plus all other forms). The nightmare continues: I'm not an accountant, and will need help with the forms for the next few years (average \$500-\$1000/year for all forms). This is all BEFORE paying 37% on investments that have already been taxed here (double taxation). I have had months of stress and tears over these unexpected, enormous amounts, and feel that I am being punished for being American and falling in love with a Belgian. I am an honest and law-abiding person, am definitely not rich, and am dismayed and horrified by this financial punishment - for what crimes? I never imagined facing double taxation or such huge fees just for tax declarations.

FBAR information collection from U.S. citizens who reside outside the United States is an undue burden due to lack of awareness, confusion of filing requirements, and definitions - even tax professionals aren't aware of the filing requirements, which puts taxpayers at risk of disproportionately high penalties.

The FBAR exists to catch overseas money laundering, but often ends up ensnaring US citizens abroad who need a basic bank account for their salary, bills to live a normal life. We aren't money launderers, we're innocent Americans who happen to live abroad. The FBAR should exclude Americans abroad to reduce the signal-to-noise ratio so Treasury can devote its resources to the actual overseas money launderers.

Additionally, the extremely low \$10,000 filing threshold has been in place since 1970. It is overdue for an update to at the very least be indexed to inflation, which would be \$79,000 for 2024. Innocent people who go over the threshold as a one-off buying their first home or paying school tuition fees are unaware of the FBAR, don't file, then face risk of penalties. People who have heard of the FBAR are scared to death of doing it incorrectly since instructions are confusing - even tax professionals recommend over-reporting "just in case".

This unfair treatment is a symptom of the overall problem - Americans abroad are treated as collateral damage in the war against overseas tax evasion and money laundering. The IRS recognizes Americans abroad as an underserved community. Surely that would mean that the FBAR is long overdue for review given that it is a massively complicated filing requirement that hasn't changed for over 50 years.

Instead of threatening innocent Americans abroad with life-altering penalties and burdensome filing requirements, the Department of Treasury should work with Congress to bring the US into line with the entire rest of the world in the way it taxes its expats.