

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 7431 was renumbered section 7437 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 109-280, which directed insertion of “or in violation of section 6104(c)” after “6103” in subsec. (a)(2) of section 7431, without specifying the act to be amended, was executed by making the insertion in subsec. (a)(2) of this section, which is section 7431 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

1998—Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 105-206, §3101(f), substituted “, plus” for the period at end.

Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 105-206, §3101(f), added par. (3).

Subsecs. (g), (h). Pub. L. 105-206, §6012(b)(3), redesignated subsec. (g), relating to special rule for information obtained under section 6103(k)(8), as (h), and substituted “(9)” for “(8)” in heading.

1997—Pub. L. 105-35, §3(d)(4), inserted “inspection or” before “disclosure” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a)(1), (2). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(a)(1), (2), substituted “Inspection or disclosure” for “Disclosure” in headings and “inspects or discloses” for “discloses” in text.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(c), amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (b) read as follows:

“(b) NO LIABILITY FOR GOOD FAITH BUT ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION.—No liability shall arise under this section with respect to any disclosure which results from a good faith, but erroneous, interpretation of section 6103.”

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(d)(1), (2), inserted “inspection or” before “disclosure” in subpars. (A) and (B)(i) and substituted “willful inspection or disclosure or an inspection or disclosure” for “willful disclosure or a disclosure” in subpar. (B)(ii).

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(d)(1), inserted “inspection or” before “disclosure”.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(b), added subsec. (e). Former subsec. (e) redesignated (f).

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(b), (d)(3), redesignated subsec. (e) as (f) and amended it generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (f) read as follows:

“(f) RETURN; RETURN INFORMATION.—For purposes of this section, the terms ‘return’ and ‘return information’ have the respective meanings given such terms in section 6103(b).”

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 105-35, §3(b), (d)(6), redesignated subsec. (f) as (g) and substituted “any inspection or use” for “any use” in par. (2).

Pub. L. 105-34, §1205(c)(2), added subsec. (g) relating to special rule for information obtained under section 6103(k)(8).

1983—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 98-67 added subsec. (f).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 109-280 effective Aug. 17, 2006, but not applicable to requests made before such date, see section 1224(c) of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as a note under section 6103 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Amendment by section 3101(f) of Pub. L. 105-206 applicable to costs incurred more than 180 days after July 22, 1998, see section 3101(g) of Pub. L. 105-206, set out as a note under section 7430 of this title.

Amendment by section 6012(b)(3) of Pub. L. 105-206 effective, except as otherwise provided, as if included in the provisions of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-34, to which such amendment relates, see section 6024 of Pub. L. 105-206, set out as a note under section 1 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENTS

Pub. L. 105-35, §3(e), Aug. 5, 1997, 111 Stat. 1106, provided that: “The amendments made by this section

[amending this section] shall apply to inspections and disclosures occurring on and after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 5, 1997].”

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-34 effective on the day 9 months after Aug. 5, 1997, see section 1205(d) of Pub. L. 105-34, set out as a note under section 6103 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1983 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 98-67 effective Aug. 5, 1983, see section 110(c) of Pub. L. 98-67, set out as a note under section 31 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 97-248, title III, §357(c), Sept. 3, 1982, 96 Stat. 646, provided that: “The amendments made by this section [enacting this section and repealing section 7217 of this title] shall apply with respect to disclosures made after the date of enactment of this Act [Sept. 3, 1982].”

§ 7432. Civil damages for failure to release lien**(a) In general**

If any officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service knowingly, or by reason of negligence, fails to release a lien under section 6325 on property of the taxpayer, such taxpayer may bring a civil action for damages against the United States in a district court of the United States.

(b) Damages

In any action brought under subsection (a), upon a finding of liability on the part of the defendant, the defendant shall be liable to the plaintiff in an amount equal to the sum of—

- (1) actual, direct economic damages sustained by the plaintiff which, but for the actions of the defendant, would not have been sustained, plus
- (2) the costs of the action.

(c) Payment authority

Claims pursuant to this section shall be payable out of funds appropriated under section 1304 of title 31, United States Code.

(d) Limitations**(1) Requirement that administrative remedies be exhausted**

A judgment for damages shall not be awarded under subsection (b) unless the court determines that the plaintiff has exhausted the administrative remedies available to such plaintiff within the Internal Revenue Service.

(2) Mitigation of damages

The amount of damages awarded under subsection (b)(1) shall be reduced by the amount of such damages which could have reasonably been mitigated by the plaintiff.

(3) Period for bringing action

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an action to enforce liability created under this section may be brought without regard to the amount in controversy and may be brought only within 2 years after the date the right of action accrues.

(e) Notice of failure to release lien

The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe reasonable procedures for a taxpayer to notify the Secretary of the failure to release a lien under section 6325 on property of the taxpayer.

(Added Pub. L. 100-647, title VI, §6240(a), Nov. 10, 1988, 102 Stat. 3746.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 7432 was renumbered 7437 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 100-647, title VI, §6240(c), Nov. 10, 1988, 102 Stat. 3747, provided that: “The amendments made by this section [enacting this section] shall apply to notices provided by the taxpayer of the failure to release a lien, and damages arising, after December 31, 1988.”

§ 7433. Civil damages for certain unauthorized collection actions

(a) In general

If, in connection with any collection of Federal tax with respect to a taxpayer, any officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service recklessly or intentionally, or by reason of negligence, disregards any provision of this title, or any regulation promulgated under this title, such taxpayer may bring a civil action for damages against the United States in a district court of the United States. Except as provided in section 7432, such civil action shall be the exclusive remedy for recovering damages resulting from such actions.

(b) Damages

In any action brought under subsection (a) or petition filed under subsection (e), upon a finding of liability on the part of the defendant, the defendant shall be liable to the plaintiff in an amount equal to the lesser of \$1,000,000 (\$100,000, in the case of negligence) or the sum of—

- (1) actual, direct economic damages sustained by the plaintiff as a proximate result of the reckless or intentional or negligent actions of the officer or employee, and
- (2) the costs of the action.

(c) Payment authority

Claims pursuant to this section shall be payable out of funds appropriated under section 1304 of title 31, United States Code.

(d) Limitations

(1) Requirement that administrative remedies be exhausted

A judgment for damages shall not be awarded under subsection (b) unless the court determines that the plaintiff has exhausted the administrative remedies available to such plaintiff within the Internal Revenue Service.

(2) Mitigation of damages

The amount of damages awarded under subsection (b)(1) shall be reduced by the amount of such damages which could have reasonably been mitigated by the plaintiff.

(3) Period for bringing action

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an action to enforce liability created under this section may be brought without regard to the amount in controversy and may be brought only within 2 years after the date the right of action accrues.

(e) Actions for violations of certain bankruptcy procedures

(1) In general

If, in connection with any collection of Federal tax with respect to a taxpayer, any officer

or employee of the Internal Revenue Service willfully violates any provision of section 362 (relating to automatic stay) or 524 (relating to effect of discharge) of title 11, United States Code (or any successor provision), or any regulation promulgated under such provision, such taxpayer may petition the bankruptcy court to recover damages against the United States.

(2) Remedy to be exclusive

(A) In general

Except as provided in subparagraph (B), notwithstanding section 105 of such title 11, such petition shall be the exclusive remedy for recovering damages resulting from such actions.

(B) Certain other actions permitted

Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to an action under section 362(h) of such title 11 for a violation of a stay provided by section 362 of such title; except that—

- (i) administrative and litigation costs in connection with such an action may only be awarded under section 7430; and
- (ii) administrative costs may be awarded only if incurred on or after the date that the bankruptcy petition is filed.

(Added Pub. L. 100-647, title VI, §6241(a), Nov. 10, 1988, 102 Stat. 3747; amended Pub. L. 104-168, title VIII, §§801(a), 802(a), July 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 1465; Pub. L. 105-206, title III, §3102(a), (c), July 22, 1998, 112 Stat. 730.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 7433 was renumbered 7437 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-206, §3102(a)(1)(A), inserted “, or by reason of negligence,” after “recklessly or intentionally”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-206, §3102(a)(1)(B)(i), (c)(2), in introductory provisions, inserted “or petition filed under subsection (e)” after “subsection (a)” and inserted “(\$100,000, in the case of negligence)” after “\$1,000,000”.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 105-206, §3102(a)(1)(B)(ii), inserted “or negligent” after “reckless or intentional”.

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 105-206, §3102(a)(2), substituted “Requirement that administrative remedies be exhausted” for “Award for damages may be reduced if administrative remedies not exhausted” in heading and amended text of par. (1) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The amount of damages awarded under subsection (b) may be reduced if the court determines that the plaintiff has not exhausted the administrative remedies available to such plaintiff within the Internal Revenue Service.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 105-206, §3102(c)(1), added subsec. (e).

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-168, §801(a), substituted “\$1,000,000” for “\$100,000”.

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 104-168, §802(a), amended par. (1) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (1) read as follows:

“(1) REQUIREMENT THAT ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES BE EXHAUSTED.—A judgment for damages shall not be awarded under subsection (b) unless the court determines that the plaintiff has exhausted the administrative remedies available to such plaintiff within the Internal Revenue Service.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-206 applicable to actions of officers or employees of Internal Revenue Service