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June 27, 2014

For Immediate Release

Canada Day IRS FATCA Hunt for Canadians Born in U.S. Begins

On Canada Day, an estimated one million Canadians become second class citizens in their own country.

From Canada Day forward, Canadian banks will ask customers opening new accounts at the major banks some rather odd questions about their citizenship. “Are you a U.S. citizen and where were you born?”

For many, these will be the most frightening and terrifying questions ever asked.

This is because the Government of Canada, due to the insistence of Canada’s banks, passed a law a few weeks ago imposing the U.S. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) on Canada.

The purpose of the ‘FATCA Hunt’ is to identify those Canadians whom the U.S. defines as ‘US persons’ and turn over their bank records to the U.S. IRS (Internal Revenue Service).

Information from staff at Toronto’s local bank branches shows that not all questions are identical: ScotiaBank asks: “Are you a ‘U.S. person’ for tax purposes?” TD Bank Canada Trust asks: “Are you a U.S. citizen and where were you born?”

At least one major bank uses information from casual conversations between customers and account managers to help determine whether the customer’s bank records should be turned over to the IRS.

The ‘FATCA Hunt’ targets people like Kate, unwilling to reveal her identity, who was born in the U.S. when her Canadian-born parents were living there. Kate came home to Canada when she was just one year old, and has lived only in Canada for the past 50 years – but the U.S. insists that this Canadian has been “cheating” the IRS out of its tax revenue by not paying her “fair share” to the U.S.

“I am horrified and betrayed that my country has agreed to hand over my personal bank account information to a foreign country” says Kate. “I and my husband are scared the IRS will take away our hard earned life savings, once it gets the details of our joint bank accounts.”

One of Kate’s responses is to fight FATCA by helping the [Alliance for the Defence of Canadian Sovereignty](http://www.adcs-adsc.ca) (ADCS-ADSC) take the Government of Canada to court for changing the law to ask these questions to Canadians.

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