

**“I FEEL THREATENED BY MY VERY
IDENTITY”**



Report

On

US Taxation and FATCA Survey

Part 4

EMOTIONAL TOLL

Laura Snyder

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Part 2 contains 287 comments submitted by survey participants. In their comments the participants describe their own personal experiences of the hardships examined in Part 1 as well as, in some cases, the hardships they have witnessed their family members and others experience. In Part 2 the comments are organized by principal theme or principal type of hardship the participant describes.

In reviewing the comments in Part 2 it is easy to recognize a common emotional theme. Set forth below in this Part 4 are excerpts where participants express (1) [fear, worry and anxiety](#), (2) [stress, frustration and confusion](#), (3) [vulnerability](#), (4) [anger and sadness](#), (5) [feeling like a criminal](#), (6) [marital problems](#), (7) [concern for US citizen children](#), (8) [feeling like a second-class citizen](#), (9) [persecution and betrayal by the United States](#), and (10) [having changed their opinion of the United States](#).

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please contact Laura Snyder at laurajanesnyder@gmail.com or on Twitter @TAPInternation.

Fear, worry and anxiety:

Comment N°	Comment
1	I [...] was terrified of making another paperwork mistake.
3	I live in fear of the accounts I do have being closed – as a result simply receiving a monthly bank statement is a traumatic experience for me.
4	I am very worried about my financial future.
6	I live under the threat of making a mistake on an IRS form and being fined for a "form crime" at an amount financially beyond my means.
9	[When I first learned of my US tax and banking obligations] I was in shock and have been operating since then in a state of extreme anxiety.
16	It is a nightmare. I feel frightened.
17	I'm desperate and worried. I've often had trouble sleeping at night because of the fear and intimidation of US tax compliance.
27	My US citizenship currently represents only fear, embarrassment, and harassment.
30	[L]iving in fear of exorbitant fines for mistakes or omissions.
54	[D]ealing with the American [tax return] causes me much stress and anxiety.
57	I was in a HUGE terrifying mess. It is very strange to be in low income category yet have horrific debt for form filing delinquency only.
58	I worry that my banks are going to take a hard line in the future toward their American account holders.
90	I worry about the future [...] about harsher penalties against US citizens abroad and their financial interests.[...] I worry about my NZ pension (equivalent to social security) being taxed, my NZ Kiwisaver (equivalent to 401K) being taxed, any income from our NZ investment decisions being taxed, paying capital gains on any NZ property we sell – I worry about the financial blackmail I will live under if I keep my US citizenship.
91	And I'm afraid to file. I'm afraid to become compliant ... and I'm afraid not to!
93	I feel like my hands are tied, and I worry about my financial future because of this unfair system.



119	I'm afraid I will be turned away from receiving a mortgage
125	I worry that I have joint ownership of a house and bank account although contributed very little.
128	I have [...] considerable uncertainty and ongoing concern about how CBT and will impact me down the line. I [...] always feel that I am drowning in absurd paperwork, vague decision-making and a feeling that someday it will all fall apart and I will face serious legal and financial consequences simply for trying to live a normal life.
150	I hide from my financial institutions for fear of being forced out for being American.
154	I am desperate to know more about how I can legally comply without jeopardizing my meager investments.
160	It's become a potentially very dangerous situation for people like me.
162	I am doubly terrified because of what the US tax laws require and the threats and extreme penalties that are applied in the event of problems with compliance, even if they are unintentional.
170	Would like to know how can I renounce to my American nationality because in the near future it could bring me more trouble.
173	I am an accidental American and struggle with the decision of making myself known.
175	[L]ife has changed when I found about FATCA and I am thinking about it everyday.
177	I felt blindsided a few years ago when I found out what having been born in the US meant for me from a financial perspective. I have had sleepless nights over US taxation.
179	I worry that if I start working full-time once my children are older that I will be blocked from making any sort of savings for my retirement. I worry that if we ever decide to buy a home, everything will have to be entirely in my husband's name [...] I am very worried that I might still overlook something and/or make a mistake on my tax returns for which I will be heavily penalized.
181	I'm nervous.
184	I am concerned about the security of my banking.
186	Now I'm in a huge mess and have to live in fear for the rest of my life and this affects my family as well,
188	I am really afraid of getting in trouble or being penalized in some way.
190	I am afraid to rock the boat and apply for anything new or to change banks.
191	This is particularly worrying in regards to retirement planning.
192	I live in constant fear that the IRS is going to come after me and brandish massive fines.
195	I fear that [mismatches between the tax systems] will cause mistakes that will cause me trouble later. [...] I'm also afraid of the cost and tax danger of changing citizenship. I'm a bit paralyzed.
219	[T]hreats I received from IRS Ogden over the complexity of foreign trust rules, and my loyalty to my child, caused me to renounce my US citizenship. [And] the \$10,000 potential penalties, with 35% of foreign trust assets, was too frightening to contemplate.
220	[I]t became too complicated, expensive and worrisome to maintain US citizenship [...W]hy suffer the daily terror of praying I could keep my bank account, mortgage, fear of entering the bank, getting the mail. [...]We are the citizenry of no one, it is actually terrifying and NO ONE CARES.
229	The biggest worry was that I would make (inadvertently) some horrendous mistake in my paperwork of tax filing and lose what I've worked all my life for.



236	[I was] unable to live without severe restrictions on my life and with the ever present threat of financial ruin for making a mistake with a form.
242	I was afraid to make additional superannuation contributions or invest in managed funds while I still had US reporting requirements.
243	I [...] became very worried about my pensions.

Stress, frustration and confusion:

Comment N°	Comment
1	It was a nightmare and caused a lot of embarrassment and guilt.
3	I tried I spent countless weekends pulling out my hair trying to do it correctly.
11	Living as a US citizen abroad has proven to be a challenging and frustrating endeavor. I feel as if my citizenship puts me at a significant disadvantage compared to my peers. [...] I have difficulty wrapping my head around all of the US tax law to the point that I have taken time off of work to try to get it all figured out [...] My US citizenship is the single largest stressor since moving to New Zealand and I am appalled that my country of birth treats me like this.
12	This whole FBAR and FATCA thing is a mess and a headache.
21	I feel like my US citizenship [...] is weighing around my neck like an albatross [...] I have never been more miserable because of the passport I hold.
22	It's a mess.
33	I am quite confused about how to comply with U.S. and French laws. [...] I would say that the whole thing is a nightmare for me and many other people.
38	The time and frustration and anger spent on all this has a toll.
43	It takes me HOURS of work and is very stressful, but I find it unacceptable to pay the fees charged.
47	Filing the proper paperwork and doing it correctly is very confusing for me.
48	I think something is really wrong when the system is so complicated that even those of us with a math degree and an MBA can't figure it out without the help of a professional.
63	It's a nightmare to have to file US tax returns because it is close to impossible to find advice or resources abroad, and someone familiar with US and resident-country laws and tax treaties. A real nightmare.
64	I also lose several days of my life each year to complete my absurdly complex US tax returns, at the end of which I end up owing zero in US taxes.
72	[T]he whole bundle of issues with FATCA, CBT, FBARs etc is incredibly stressful. [...] unless something changes, someday I will have to renounce my citizenship - which would make me very sad indeed.
81	I don't understand why all of this is so complicated.
82	It is extremely frustrating that my retirement account investments, which are local to the country of my bona-fide residence, are subject to such a punitive tax regime
90	I tried to be compliant but found it confusing, the forms overly complicated, tax year differences, exchange rates etc.
100	Very frustrating to work in a bank and not to be able to apply to any financial service cause they are afraid of accepting Americans.
103	Meeting every request from financial institutions has become a nightmare.



117	I also find it incredibly frustrating to be taxed on my worldwide income, even though I haven't lived in the US for years.
129	I have left [a not-for profit] organization simply out of frustration and disappoint about being let down by this unjust issue of dual taxation.
157	I am beside myself with frustration.
159	I am faced with either destroying my livelihood or becoming a tax violator.
161	I am extremely discouraged and, due to the financial consequences, am having to seriously consider renouncing my US citizenship. I desperately do not want to do so.
163	I will go bankrupt
166	Dealing with US taxation is stressful, and limits my opportunities
171	A nightmare.
174	I don't see an end to this nightmare.
175	I do not understand the bureaucratic english, wich leaves me helpless back and I have to hope the there are no mistakes in the file.
186	It's very stressful and is impacting my health, my family, I feel depressed and I can't sleep well. It's driving me insane.
203	I am tired of being harassed.
205	This has caused me innumerable sleepless nights [...] It made the purchase of our first home nerve-wracking and panic-inducing instead of joyful.
210	This law has caused me and my family a great deal of hardship.
216	[I renounced my US] citizenship due to harassment and stress and unnecessary expenses.
217	[T]he annual ordeal of filing my US tax return to the IRS and the associated FBAR papers for the US Treasury had become an unsustainable, exhausting, intrusive and expensive process, despite my never owing a single penny (cent) in taxes to the US.
228	US tax returns are a complete horror.
232	It's a nightmare.
249	Hopefully this FATCA nightmare will end soon.
252	It is extremely stressful to have to file my taxes every year and not know whether or not I need to report my bank accounts.

Vulnerability:

Comment N°	Comment
1	I am cut off from my own company's bank accounts and accounts with my husband thanks to tax, FATCA and FBAR. My name is also not on property. How do I protect myself?
3	I pray that I die before my husband. I know that if he dies first, my life as a US citizen living outside the US will become a living hell.
4	My husband doesn't want me on the bank accounts which is understandable but makes me feel vulnerable.
5	Cannot be on joint account with husband. I am powerless in the event of his death.
8	My husband of 38 years and I have always had joint accounts, however we've recently have started to question whether the accounts should just be in his name to simplify things. [...] American wives who are raising families and may not be working full-



	time) are put in a precarious and disadvantaged situation when it comes to financial independence.
119	My husband is not a US citizen. We don't have a joint bank account because of this mess. I'm afraid I will be turned away from receiving a mortgage, which means everything will have to be in his name.
120	I am not able to open a joint account with my non-American spouse, as he refuses to report his assets to IRS[...] important assets like house and car are only in my husband's name. Such a situation could be dangerous.
187	Everything is in my husband's name which would cause me major problems were he to pass away.
198	If [my husband] dies before I do, I fear that I will be in an intensely complicated tax situation of which I have no understanding
183	I am concerned about buying a home while still a USC because sale would be subject to US taxation unless we put it entirely in my spouse's name which means I would have to trust my rights to the probate courts were I to outlive my spouse.
228	I put all our savings in my NRA husband's [name].
250	I think more attention needs to be drawn how this policy is discriminatory against women. There are many women who are trailing spouses, where the assets are in the husband's name, where they have lost their jobs and are trying to leave unhappy relationships and abusive relationships.

Anger and sadness:

Comment N°	Comment
7	I am on a small disability pension from Norway. I am horrified that the COST OF LEAVING plus EXIT TAX on my life savings (invested in my home) will be taxed also. I am a hostage of the IRS! [...]... this really pisses me off.
129	I have <u>guilt feelings</u> and I am angry.
174	It's a disgrace and I'm beyond angry.
179	I am angry I even have to deal with this. [...] I'm extremely angry at how the US government treats its citizens abroad [...] I am angry that normal, middle class US citizens have had their lives ruined by these policies or been forced to make the painful decision of giving up their US citizenship.
209	I feel I have no choice but to renounce my citizenship. This makes me very sad and angry that my own country is forcing me to do this.
214	Although US citizenship had become unbearable, it still tore me up to go to the embassy and renounce.
220	I live with rage, sorrow, relief and confusion about who I am.[...] I will NEVER, EVER forgive them.
222	I am angry that the US forces me to choose between my marriage and my country of birth.
223	I feel very bitter.



225	To say that I am angry at the US for forcing me to renounce understates matters.
226	I am devastated to have had to renounce, but all the regulations and taxes drove me to it
227	[Renouncing my US citizenship] was the most difficult decision ever and on to this day I am truly sick in my stomach. [...] Since the beginning of FATCA I lived in hell. [I'm] furious.
233	I can't begin to express the anger I feel at the US for its bullying of other countries with FATCA.
234	Renouncing was absolutely devastating for me. [...] I was holding back tears throughout the process and wasn't going to say much about why we were renouncing, but I was so emotional I just let loose and explained how citizen based taxation is ruining our lives, how unfair it is and how I can't take the stress and anxiety it gives me anymore. [...] It felt totally surreal to be there cutting ties to my home country, there is a profound sadness in losing that connection and a feeling of newfound freedom at the same time.
242	I am angry that I was forced to make [the decision to renounce] when my neighbors from other countries were not.
243	I felt the renouncing my US citizenship was my only option. I am a 13th generation American and this has hurt.

Feel like a criminal:

Comment N°	Comment
12	I followed my spouse - is that a crime punishing a yearly hassle and headache for being a US citizen?
21	I am not a criminal and I am fed up of being treated as such.
31	I [...] resent the language used at the FATCA website, which seems to imply I'm some kind of criminal hiding my wealth in some offshore haven.
64	I feel as if I am a hunted criminal, the way the US treats its citizens living abroad, receiving no benefits, no representation, none in government caring about the consequences of their laws on myself and my fellow expatriates, while at the same time treated with contempt and suspicion by the US government.
67	I dislike [...] the fact that I must report bank accounts to something called the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. This name suggests that holding a foreign bank account is in itself a crime requiring enforcement measures, whereas as a person living outside the United States I must have such foreign bank accounts to live my daily life.
110	I am an honorably retired U.S. military person and I am put into the same category with the tax frauds and cheats.
169	I find FATCA a huge invasion of my privacy and my family's privacy, and quite offensive that my details are being shared with the USA's financial crimes agency.
187	The whole situation has deeply affected me [...] I feel so oppressed filing my local checking account to the financial crimes unit of the US treasury, like I am a criminal!



218	Six weeks after being humiliated in the lobby of a UK bank, I was no longer a US citizen.
220	Skulking around like a criminal having done nothing wrong, save a few parking tickets, is no way to live.

Marital problems:

Comment N°	Comment
15	My wife is understandingly not happy having her funds reported to the IRS, so we even talked about divorce for tax purposes only.
21	My spouse and myself have been having problems because of my citizenship.
25	My inability to [...] assure my family's finances places significant strain on my marriage.
58	[M]y French spouse is angry when he must turn over his information to the IRS.
65	The time required to gather data for my tax preparer strains my marriage. My non-US husband of 29 years cannot comprehend the onerous requirements placed on US citizens.
72	It is an issue which has created tension in my family as we are all angry about it but have disagreements about how to deal with it.
90	I worry about [...] my relationship with my partner, who is the major financial contributor to all our investments and our home. Why should he have to pay this burden?
174	This has put a serious strain on my marriage [...] When I got married, I insisted to my partner to keep all our assets separated (very uncommon in our culture), because I wanted to keep him safe. It was a long and painful negotiation, which really tested the trust we have in each other.
199	The stress of all this is horrible and it causes strain in our marriage. My husband inevitably ends up paying for my US taxes to be prepared (to say I owe nothing) and resents it. He does not want involved in FBARS etc.
205	Being subject to two tax systems simultaneously causes me a great deal of anxiety which also has a very negative effect on my husband.

Concern for US citizen children:

Comment N°	Comment
1	I worry about [my son] losing out on job opportunities or being unable to bank properly.
3	I have regular discussions with my kids about what it will mean, when they reach adulthood, to be US citizens living outside the US, and about the hardships they will face.
6	My children's lives and careers are doomed before they even start.



20	I worry that our children who are American citizens and have never lived or worked in the US will have this burden of filing and paying taxes to the US while living abroad for their ENTIRE FUCKING LIFE. It's completely unfair to them and this law is outrageous.
30	The situation of our children is outrageous
31	I'm considering advising my kids to give up their citizenships in the US, though I find that very sad.
161	I desperately regret registering my sons' births abroad, as they are now subject to this regime.
179	It would break my heart if [...] my dual citizen daughters [were forced to give up their US citizenship].
180	I am worried about the consequences for my daughters who are just beginning their adult lives.
187	I am very upset that my kids are dual citizens.
189	I made a poisoned gift to my daughter, putting her in the same situation. Since I know that I do not sleep anymore...
199	I am sad we got our kids registered as US citizens. At the time FATCA etc were not known or enforced, if it had been I would have renounced sooner and never burdened them with this horrible ordeal.

Feeling like a second-class citizen:

Comment N°	Comment
4	US taxation and FATCA disadvantages me in my resident country. I feel like a second class citizen.
14	We feel abused by our country AND we feel discriminated against where we live. We have also become second class citizens in the eyes of financial institutions - they see us as a PROBLEM, rather than as a client!
18	[B]een made to feel like a pariah!
29	I am a second class citizen in both the US and in the country where I reside.
44	I am doubly discriminated against; by the requirement to have advanced knowledge of US tax laws in order to comply with US reporting requirements, and by non-US entities who refuse to provide financial services to a US Person as a result of US policy.
64	I feel handicapped in my life due to US taxation matters.
166	I am at a distinct disadvantage when planning for my future compared to my friends and neighbors, solely because of my US citizenship.
233	I am still being threatened with loss of banking and insurance if I cannot offer proof of lack of American nationality.
236	The US extraterritorial tax code and FATCA made me a second class US citizen, a second class British citizen and a second class human being.
263	I simply resent being treated differently from other French citizens (I have dual nationality) when it comes to banking.



Persecution and betrayal by the United States:

Comment N°	Comment
4	I feel persecuted by my birth country (USA) and betrayed by my adopted country because of FATCA.
61	I find it incredibly abusive and entitled that the US gov't would tax a US citizen who makes NO income from the US or on US soil.
71	I just can't believe our government treats us so very poorly. Feels like I'm being punished for marrying a foreigner and living abroad.
92	I love the US but feel betrayed by the complex requirements they keep me unsure of where I stand or what I can do.
161	The level of dis-interest and lack of care that I have experienced from the representatives is shocking and depressing.
166	When I tell friends and colleagues about what I go through each year, they are shocked that the US government would do this to its own people.
179	Why does the US penalize its expats with this draconian tax policy?
209	The outrageous fee to renounce adds insult to injury and is just another form of punishment for leaving the homeland.
220	Who would want to be part of a nation that abuses its citizens in such a fashion, won't even acknowledge situation, does not provide representation for this unique group yet feels they have the right to extract taxes for nothing? It is simply disgusting. I felt betrayed by the US and will NEVER forgive them for forcing me to renounce my citizenship; it was part of who I am. [...] On the day of my renouncement I was in a fugue state, the only way for me to emotionally survive. Once there I just wanted to punch, kick, scream at the consular official, tell her how much I HATED the US government but obviously that was not the correct behaviour.
221	Considering that I am a veteran, the treatment that I have received from the US government is lamentable and hypocritical.
238	It was basically terrorism so I had to renounce.
252	America needs to stop punishing its citizens for living abroad by forcing us to file our taxes every year. I am not avoiding paying taxes - I pay them in my country of residence.
258	I just generally think it is a travesty & tragedy that the USA inflicts such unnecessary pain (in all forms) on its citizens abroad.
264	The recent tax changes feel more like a penalty for Americans or green card holders who live abroad.

Opinion of United States has changed:

Comment N°	Comment
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9	My life has been turned upside down since 2016, a real paradigm shift in my consciousness of having thought of the US as the greatest country in the world and I was very proud to be a citizen, now I feel threatened by my very identity.
64	When I first went abroad, I was surprised at how intensely patriotic I felt toward the USA. But over the past ten years, these feelings have reversed. I am angry, resentful, and ashamed to be an American. The USA has lost a formerly strident unofficial ambassador, at no gain to the US treasury.
99	Before I learned of FATCA, FBARs and now that Business Repatriation Tax, I was proud to be born as an American. Now-a-days I cower under cover of my Canadian citizenship with hopes that I will one day be once again a proud American
168	I have lost all respect for the US as they are aware of the problems they have caused with their laws and have refused to act to solve them. Placing a price on my head to renounce is nothing short of disgusting.
211	I am in so much pain that I cannot represent the US anymore.
231	Found out about FATCA, CBT, FBAR & Co. and it opened my eyes to the brainwashing I was given growing up [...] I have lost all faith or love for the US.