



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 13, 2017

Congressman to Constituents: You Don't Pay My Salary

An Oklahoma congressman was caught on video telling constituents that the notion that they pay his salary is “bullcrap” — a remark that has not exactly boosted his popularity.

Responding to a question at a Tuesday town hall in Jay, Oklahoma, Congressman Markwayne Mullin (shown), a Republican who represents the eastern portion of the Sooner State, took exception to his questioner's assertion that taxpayers are responsible for his upkeep.



“You say you pay for me to do this,” Mullin said. “Bullcrap. I pay for myself. I paid enough taxes before I got there [Congress] and continue to through my company to pay my own salary. This is a service. No one here pays me to go.”

That response did not go over well with the crowd. Some attendees began shouting back at Mullin, who added, “I'm just saying this is a service for me, not a career, and I thank God this is not how I make my living.”

Video of the incident has since been posted to social media, where it has not done much to enhance Mullin's image.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5p5rLg2gOg>

As a member of Congress, Mullin earns \$175,000 per year plus benefits, every penny of it extracted from taxpayers. His spokeswoman told the [Tulsa World](#) that he was not trying to say that his pay did not come from taxes, only that he has paid more in taxes than he will receive in congressional salary and benefits.

“The congressman is referencing the federal taxes that he and his businesses have paid to the government over the years, prior to his being in office,” said Amy Lawrence. “Like all business owners, Congressman Mullin pays his taxes, which contribute to congressional salaries.”

According to the paper, “Mullin owns several companies under the Mullin Plumbing umbrella.” [McClatchy](#) reports that he earned at least \$610,000 in 2015. Thus, the 39-year-old congressman, who took over the family business when he was 20, may well have paid (and be paying) more in taxes than he receives in salary and benefits. That does not, however, negate the fact that his constituents are also forking over taxes that may be used to pay him.

Nor does it negate the fact that, as Mullin said, his work in Congress is supposed to be a “service” to his constituents. “His aspiration is to be a career legislator and not a career politician,” Lawrence told the [Tulsa World](#). “He is not, nor does he ever aspire to be, a career politician. His priority will always be to serve his constituents to the best of his ability.” His attitude in the video suggests otherwise.

To be fair, the thrice-elected Mullin has encountered a great deal of (often organized) opposition at recent public events, a problem common to Republican elected officials since the election of President



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Donald Trump. According to the [Tulsa World](#), he also had an altercation with an attendee at a March 31 town hall in Pryor, Oklahoma, when that person insisted on holding up a red piece of paper to indicate her disagreement with his comments. Although at first it appeared that Mullin was going to have her ejected from the premises, he ultimately backed down, realizing he was “play[ing] right into their [protestors’] hands.” He canceled a Tuesday-evening town hall, citing safety concerns, although “attendees had already entered the building,” noted McClatchy.

His frustration is therefore understandable. Unfortunately for Mullin, words uttered in frustration often reveal the true character lurking beneath the speaker’s carefully crafted public persona — and what Mullin’s remark reveals about him isn’t pretty.

Photo: Rep. Markwayne Mullin



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