

BEFORE THE TAX COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO

In the Matter of the Protest of)	
)	DOCKET NO. 21955
[Redacted])	
Petitioners.)	DECISION
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_____)	

On May 28, 2009, the staff of the Taxpayer Accounting Section of the Revenue Operations Division of the Idaho State Tax Commission issued a Notice of Deficiency Determination to [Redacted] (taxpayers) proposing additional income tax and interest for the taxable year 2008 in the total amount of \$260.49.

The taxpayers filed a timely appeal and petition for redetermination. The taxpayers did not respond to the Tax Commission’s hearing rights letter and have provided nothing further for the Tax Commission to consider. The Tax Commission, having reviewed the file, hereby issues its decision.

The taxpayers timely filed their 2008 Idaho individual income tax return. During the processing of income tax returns, the taxpayers’ return was identified as a return on which a dependent exemption was claimed on more than one income tax return. The Taxpayer Accounting section (Taxpayer Accounting) requested information from the taxpayers, and the taxpayers responded with a copy of [Redacted] divorce decree. Taxpayer Accounting reviewed the information, determined the taxpayers were not entitled to the dependent exemption [Redacted], and sent them a tax correction letter. The taxpayers disagreed with Taxpayer Accounting’s correction by sending in additional information showing they were current with their child support payments and a statement saying that they fulfilled their obligation for

claiming the dependent exemption. Taxpayer Accounting reviewed the information and sent the matter for administrative review.

The Tax Commission reviewed the matter and sent the taxpayers a letter that discussed the methods available for redetermining a protested Notice of Deficiency Determination. The taxpayers failed to respond to the Tax Commission's letter, so the Tax Commission decided the matter based upon the information available.

On December 2, 1993, [Redacted] marriage [Redacted] ended. The divorce decree provided that [Redacted] would receive the state and federal dependent exemption [Redacted] if he was current and timely with his child support payments and other obligations [Redacted]. The taxpayers, believing they fulfilled the requirements, claimed a dependent exemption [Redacted] on their 2008 income tax return.

Deductions are a matter of legislative grace, and taxpayers bear the burden of proving that they are entitled to the deductions claimed. INDOPCO, Inc. v. Commissioner, 503 U.S. 79, 84, 112 S.Ct. 1039, 117 L.Ed.2d 226 (1992); New Colonial Ice Co. v. Helvering, 292 U.S. 435, 440, 54 S.Ct. 788, 78 L.Ed. 1348 (1934). Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 151(c) allows a taxpayer a deduction of the exemption amount for each dependent as defined in IRC section 152. A child of a taxpayer is generally a dependent of the taxpayer. However, IRC section 152(e) provides a special rule for divorced parents. It states in pertinent part:

(1) In general.

Notwithstanding subsection (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), or (d)(1)(C), if—

(A) a child receives over one-half of the child's support during the calendar year from the child's parents—

- (i) who are divorced or legally separated under a decree of divorce or separate maintenance,
 - (ii) who are separated under a written separation agreement, or
 - (iii) who live apart at all times during the last 6 months of the calendar year,
- and—

(B) such child is in the custody of 1 or both of the child's parents for more than one-half of the calendar year, such child shall be treated as being the qualifying child or qualifying relative of the noncustodial parent for a calendar year if the requirements described in paragraph (2) or (3) are met.

(2) Exception where custodial parent releases claim to exemption for the year. For purposes of paragraph (1), the requirements described in this paragraph are met with respect to any calendar year if—

(A) the custodial parent signs a written declaration (in such manner and form as the Secretary may by regulations prescribe) that such custodial parent will not claim such child as a dependent for any taxable year beginning in such calendar year, and

(B) the noncustodial parent attaches such written declaration to the noncustodial parent's return for the taxable year beginning during such calendar year.

[Redacted] divorce decree states that he will receive the dependent exemption [Redacted] if certain conditions are met. However, IRC section 152(e)(2) clearly requires that the custodial parent sign a written declaration releasing the dependency exemption in order for the noncustodial parent to claim the child's dependency exemption. The taxpayers provided no such declaration, nor did they show that [Redacted] was the custodial parent.

The control over a child's dependency exemption conferred on the custodial parent by section 152(e)(2) was intended by Congress to simplify the process of determining who is entitled to claim dependency exemptions for children of a marriage. See H. Rept. 98-432 (Part 2), at 1498 (1984). To make section 152(e)(2) work as intended, that control must be preserved by insisting on adherence to the requirements of section 152(e)(2). Simply attaching a State court order that is not signed by the custodial parent to the return of the noncustodial parent does not satisfy the express statutory requirements of section 152(e)(2)(A). Miller v. CIR, 114 T.C. 184, (2000).

Since the signed release is a requirement for IRC section 152(e) to apply and no release form was provided, the determination of whether the taxpayers can claim the dependent exemption reverts to IRC section 152(c) and (d).

IRC section 152(c) defines a "qualifying child" as an individual who: (1) bears a certain relationship to the taxpayer, such as the taxpayer's child; (2) has the same principal place of abode as the taxpayer for more than one-half of the taxable year; (3) meets certain age

requirements; and (4) has not provided over one-half of the individual's own support for the taxable year. IRC section 152(c)(1) through (3).

IRC section 152(d) defines a "qualifying relative" as an individual: (1) who bears a certain relationship to the taxpayer, such as the taxpayer's child; (2) whose gross income for the taxable year is less than the exemption amount; (3) with respect to whom the taxpayer provides over one-half of the individual's support for the taxable year; and (4) who is not a qualifying child of the taxpayer or of any other taxpayer for the taxable year. IRC section 152(d)(1) and (2).

To claim a dependent exemption, the taxpayer must show he has either a qualifying child or a qualifying relative. Regarding a qualifying child, the taxpayers have not shown that [Redacted] principal place of abode was with them for more than one-half the taxable year. They have not met their burden of proof that [Redacted] was a qualifying child in 2008. As for meeting the requirements for a qualifying relative of the taxpayers, the taxpayers failed to show that they provided over one-half of [Redacted] support for the taxable year or that [Redacted] was not a qualifying child of any other taxpayer for the taxable year. It is presumed, from the fact that [Redacted] is required to pay child support, that [Redacted] was in the physical custody of [Redacted] ex-spouse in 2008. This being the case, [Redacted] was likely the qualifying child of another taxpayer. Regardless, the taxpayers have not carried their burden of proving [Redacted] was their qualifying relative in 2008.

Because the taxpayers have failed to establish that [Redacted] was either a qualifying child or a qualifying relative for purposes of IRC section 152, the Tax Commission finds that the taxpayers are not entitled to a dependency exemption deduction [Redacted] for 2008.

WHEREFORE, the Notice of Deficiency Determination dated May 28, 2009, is hereby APPROVED, AFFIRMED, and MADE FINAL.

IT IS ORDERED and THIS DOES ORDER that the taxpayers pay the following tax and interest (computed to December 17, 2009):

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>INTEREST</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2008	\$259	\$ 9	\$268

DEMAND for immediate payment of the foregoing amount is hereby made and given.

An explanation of the petitioners' right to appeal this decision is enclosed.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2009.

IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this _____ day of _____, 2009, a copy of the within and foregoing DECISION was served by sending the same by United States mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to:

[Redacted]

Receipt No.
