

**BEFORE THE TAX COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

In the Matter of the Protest of	)	
	)	DOCKET NO. 22076
[Redacted]	)	
Petitioners.	)	DECISION
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On July 10, 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 \$826.

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 the taxpayers' return, the Taxpayer Accounting Section (Taxpayer Accounting) found that the taxpayers claimed additional dependent exemptions that were also claimed on another income tax return. Taxpayer Accounting requested additional information from the taxpayers. The taxpayers responded by sending in a copy of [Redacted] divorce decree from a previous marriage stating he could claim his children as dependents. 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.

[Redacted] was previously married to [Redacted] and four children were born to the parties. [Redacted] divorced on February 11, 1998, and was ordered to pay child support. The taxpayers claimed a dependent exemption for three of [Redacted] children, [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. 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.

The taxpayers provided a copy of a page from [Redacted] divorce decree that states he is entitled to the dependent exemptions for his minor children. 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, the determination of whether the taxpayer 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 or grandchild; (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 or grandchild; (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. Section 152(d)(1) and (2).

To claim a dependent exemption, the taxpayers must show they have 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 of the taxable year. They have not met their burden of proving 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 [Redacted] were not a qualifying child of any other taxpayer for the taxable year. It is presumed, from the fact that the taxpayers are required to pay child support, that at least one, if not all three, of the children were in the physical custody of [Redacted] ex-spouse in 2008. This being the case, [Redacted] are likely the qualifying children of another taxpayer. Regardless, the taxpayers have not carried their burden of proving that any of the children were their qualifying relative in 2008.

Because the taxpayers have failed to establish that [Redacted] were 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 for 2008.

WHEREFORE, the Notice of Deficiency Determination dated July 10, 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 1, 2009):

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>INTEREST</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2008	\$819	\$ 7	\$826

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

An explanation of the taxpayers' 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.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_