



October 21, 2020

The Honorable Jamie D. McCourt
American Ambassador
United States Embassy of Paris, France
2 avenue Gabriel, 75008
Paris, France

Dear Ambassador McCourt,

I am the President of the Accidental Americans Association, the world's first organization to represent and defend accidental Americans against the serious consequences of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and Citizenship-Based Taxation (CBT).

As you are probably aware, the term "accidental American" refers to millions of individuals who acquired U.S. citizenship by accident of birth, but have no ties with the United States. Many did not live there beyond babyhood, have neither worked nor studied there, and often have no U.S. social security number (SSN) because it was not mandatory before the Tax Reform Act of 1986. The majority does not even speak English.

Because of FATCA's extraterritorial legislation, passed by the U.S. Congress in 2010, tens of thousands of French "accidental Americans" are, because of their American nationality, being denied access to financial services in France. These include opening bank accounts, taking out a mortgage and contributing to pension schemes.

In order to comply with U.S. legislation, French banks are asking accidental Americans to provide either a certificate of loss of nationality or a U.S. SSN.

Consequently, in order to avoid being discriminated against in their own country, thousands of French people want to get rid of their American nationality. **But this seems to be a major problem for the State Department as it is making every effort to restrict this right to renunciation.**

First of all, there is the exorbitant cost of the procedure. Before FATCA, it was free. Since shortly after the act became law, a fee of \$2,350 was imposed. This is more than the average monthly salary of French employees.¹

Secondly, for more than 7 months, the renunciation services and Federal Benefits Unit have been closed allegedly because of the Covid-19 pandemic. **This is totally incomprehensible because all the other services of your embassy have remained open.**

¹ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4277680?sommaire=4318291>

The closures mean that French "accidental Americans" suffer a double penalty and find themselves in an inextricable situation. They cannot apply either for an SSN or renunciation of U.S. citizenship in order to obtain a certificate of loss of citizenship as demanded by their banks.

So therefore, on behalf of all French accidental Americans, I would urge you to to re-open without delay the renunciation services in Paris and the Federal Benefits Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Fabien Lehagre
President
Accidental Americans Association

