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Performance Czar Killefer Withdraws Candidacy

By LAURA MECKLER

Nancy Killefer, nominated by President Barack Obama to be the federal government's first chief performance officer, is withdrawing from the post, the White House said Tuesday.



Getty Images

Barack Obama announces Chief Performance Officer Nancy Killefer on Jan. 7.

"I recognize that your agenda and the duties facing your Chief Performance Officer are urgent," Killefer wrote in a letter to the president asking him to withdraw her name. "I have also come to realize in the current environment that my personal tax issue of D.C. Unemployment tax could be used to create exactly the kind of distraction and delay those duties must avoid."

A White House spokeswoman said more information would be released later in the day.

In making the appointment, Mr. Obama said the appointment of Ms. Killefer, an executive at the consulting firm McKinsey & Co., was "among the most important that I will make."

Ms. Killefer, 55 years old, failed to pay employment taxes on household help for a year and a half, the Associated Press reported. In 2005, the AP said, the District of Columbia filed a \$946.69 tax lien on her home for failure to pay the unemployment compensation tax. The error was resolved five months later.

Ms. Killefer is the third Obama nominee to confront tax problems. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner was confirmed despite disclosure about his failure to pay certain taxes. Tom Daschle, Obama's pick for Health and Human Services, is under scrutiny for his delinquent payment of some \$140,000 in taxes and interest.

An administration official confirmed that she is withdrawing over a tax problem. The official said that the matter surfacing during the vetting that took place before her nomination was announced and the Obama team decided to move forward anyway.

"But the environment changed," the official said. "On the heels of Geithner and Daschle, she just didn't want to go through with it."

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