

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER 250 [NW268E]

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Adv A de W Alberts (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Finance:

How many Members of Parliament of each specified party have been audited by the SA Revenue Service (Sars) in the (a) 2011-12 and (b) 2012-13 financial years?

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REPLY:

SARS unfortunately does not keep records of taxpayers according to their party political affiliation. In terms of the Constitution, South Africans are free to make certain choices regarding basic rights such as the right to belong to a particular political party. SARS has no interest in such information and therefore no records are kept in relation to such choices.

SARS does, however, render a specific service to Members of Parliament in general and for that reason it has a dedicated unit in Cape Town to assist Members of Parliament. It also provides dedicated services to Members of Parliament via its VIP Office in Pretoria.

The SARS compliance system is based on the most modern tax administration model which relies on people willingly and voluntarily doing the right thing. The majority of our citizens are willing and eager to comply. SARS's compliance strategy accommodates them and makes it easy for them to fulfil their obligations. However, those who choose not to comply face the full force of the law. Audits are intended to increase revenue collection and improve compliance with tax and customs legislation pursuant to SARS legislative mandate and strategic objectives.

As part of the risk-based approach used by SARS to identify and investigate non-compliance with tax and customs laws, risk-profiling is applied to all tax payers and across all tax types or tax products. As part of the risk-profiling of individual taxpayers, SARS uses a variety of sources of information including third party data and risk rules which assist in identifying potential discrepancies between the income and assets declared by taxpayers and their

actual income and assets. Where such a potential discrepancy is identified, a taxpayer's declaration is selected for further review.