

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2020

Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC 20220

Commissioner Charles P. Rettig
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave NH
Washington DC 20224

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

I write to convey concerns that I have heard from New Hampshire constituents regarding the significant delays in processing tax returns and the lack of timely status updates for taxpayers from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The IRS currently has an enormous backlog, with an estimated 10 million pieces of mail to open and process, including 4.7 million tax returns¹. With so many families experiencing unprecedented economic distress due to the impacts of the novel coronavirus or COVID-19, the IRS must adhere to a reasonable timeframe for processing returns and sending refunds for tax year 2019.

Receiving an income tax refund can mean the difference of thousands of dollars for New Hampshire families. For those who are without a consistent source of income during the COVID-19 pandemic, this refund can serve as a critical lifeline as rent, bills and everyday costs pile up. The IRS must take concrete steps to improve its services and better serve people who filed timely but are still waiting on their returns. Constituents attempting to track the status of their refunds continue to see that their returns are simply pending with no estimate of when to expect it. Others are seeing that there is no record at all, despite sending their paperwork in months ago. The agency must do more to process paper and electronic returns and share this information publicly.

Providing up-to-date and detailed information regarding the status of millions of already-filed tax returns will help Americans plan as they continue to confront the harsh economic realities of COVID-19. As such, I request a timeframe for filed tax refunds to be issued for both paper and electronic filings and that this information and current processing times be shared with taxpayers.

Congress and this Administration must continue do everything possible to assist families during this time of economic hardship. To support this effort, I urge your agency to swiftly

¹ Eckert, Toby. "Millions of Paper Tax Returns Go Unopened at Short-Staffed IRS." POLITICO, 2020, www.politico.com/news/2020/05/29/paper-tax-returns-irs-290112.

improve its service to American taxpayers in receiving the tax refunds to which they are entitled. Thank you for your urgent attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

CC: Terri Polvino, Taxpayer Advocate Services