

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 8, 2021

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC 20220

The Honorable Charles Rettig
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

I write to convey once again the concerns I have received from New Hampshire constituents regarding significant delays from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in processing tax returns and providing timely status updates for tax payers. According to the IRS agency website¹, there remained still 7.1 million individual and 2.3 million business tax returns for tax year 2019 unprocessed as of November 24, 2020. Indeed, I have heard from numerous constituents who are confused that their 2019 returns have not been processed and, if owed, refunds not issued. Moreover, many of those same constituents have expressed frustration at their inability to receive accurate information from the IRS about the status of their return, when they may expect it to be processed, and when they may expect to receive a refund.

Taxpayers who work hard to prepare and file their taxes before applicable deadlines understandably expect their returns will be processed in a reasonable timeframe and that they can receive answers to important questions they may have about the status of their return without having to wait on hold for hours to speak to a customer service representative. And especially now, as families continue to struggle with the economic fallout of this pandemic, delivering tax refunds in a timely fashion is critical for taxpayers who are struggling to make ends meet.

Congress recognized the unprecedented strain that responding to this pandemic would place on federal agencies, including the IRS, and provided significant resources in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help agencies implement the various new programs and additional requirements created or imposed by that legislation. But processing tax returns and issuing refunds are basic responsibilities of the IRS; it is not unreasonable for Congress to expect these core functions continue to be handled in as efficient a manner as possible. That we have entered calendar year 2021 and there are 2019 returns and refunds that remain to be processed and issued is unacceptable.

¹ <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-operations-during-covid-19-mission-critical-functions-continue>

Accordingly, and with the 2020 tax filing season rapidly approaching, I respectfully request the following information:

- How many 2019 individual and business tax returns remain to be processed?
- What steps, if any, has the IRS taken to expedite processing of remaining 2019 returns?
- How have funds appropriated by the CARES Act been deployed, and are there additional resources the IRS needs to ensure timely processing of returns for 2019 and beyond?
- What is the anticipated date of completion for processing of remaining 2019 returns?
- What will be the impact for taxpayers who file their 2020 returns in a timely fashion of an outstanding unprocessed 2019 return?
- Are there any additional considerations for taxpayers with unprocessed 2019 returns as they prepare their 2020 return?

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen

CC: Erin Collins, National Taxpayer Advocate