

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2021

Erin M. Collins
National Taxpayer Advocate
Internal Revenue Service U.S.
1111 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20224

Ms. Collins,

With the 2020 tax filing season beginning, our offices are prepared to help our constituents with various questions and concerns they have with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Due to the disruptions and complicated situations faced by Iowans during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all our offices are anticipating a significant increase in constituent requests for assistance with resolving tax issues.

Our constituents are already dealing with new unfamiliar situations like unemployment and the Recovery Rebate Credit with reduced ability to get in person help, through programs like Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). In addition, recent reporting from ProPublica has revealed backlogs at the IRS which are likely to lead to additional problems this tax season.

Congressional offices often help constituents resolve these concerns with assistance from local Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS), alleviating the workload on the IRS and assisting our constituents more efficiently. However, the ability of our offices to resolve these concerns quickly and effectively depends on an efficient Iowa TAS office, which is under-resourced at a critical time.

Recent departures from the Iowa TAS office have left the office with one person dealing with intake and only one caseworker, with a caseload limited to thirty active cases at one time, to help resolve cases from Iowans. We are also not aware of any expedited efforts to hire additional staff before April 15, 2021.

We are concerned that without additional staff, our constituents will be unable to get help before the tax filing deadline. This is of added concern given the need for constituents who may have had issues with their Economic Impact Payments to be able to claim their Recovery Rebate Credit. The lack of experienced staff and institutional knowledge in the office not only reduces the TAS office's capacity to help Iowans who reach out directly but also reduces the capacity of our offices to help resolve these matters for our constituents.

The increased likelihood of delayed service and issue resolution only worsens the stress, uncertainty, and financial burden that many Iowans have felt over the past year and will continue to feel in 2021. We are asking for immediate proactive measures to be taken to mitigate the disruption in casework, such as the temporary transfer of experienced TAS caseworkers to the Des

Moines office or the ability for Iowa Congressional offices or their constituents to work with other TAS offices.

We thank you to your attention and prompt response to this letter, which will ensure Iowans have the resources and services they need to address, and resolve, their concerns.



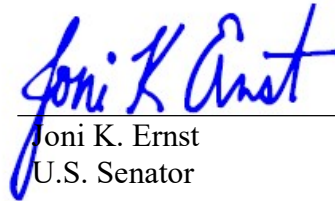
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