

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2020

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig  
Commissioner  
Internal Revenue Service  
1111 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Rettig,

We write to express concerns about the quality and timeliness of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)'s responses (or lack thereof) to questions from our constituents about the delivery status of Economic Impact Payments (EIP). We appreciate the significant operational challenges that the coronavirus poses to the agency and understand that there are legitimate reasons for processing and disbursement delays. However, there are still too many taxpayers across the country who have waited for weeks and without relief in sight. We share their concerns and urge you to take immediate action to speed the delivery of these payments.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is the largest stimulus package in American history. The CARES Act authorized \$425 billion in funding for the EIP program. That funding is distributed in \$1,200 payments (sometimes referred to as “stimulus checks”) to each American making \$75,000 per year or less. Congress worked quickly to draft this and other COVID-19-related relief bills to address the severe economic hardships necessary to protect public health.

Last month, the National Bureau of Economic Research declared that the U.S. economy entered its first recession in over a decade. The unemployment rate in May was in the double digits—about 16 percent. Over the eight weeks ending on May 9th, 36.5 million Americans filed unemployment claims.<sup>1</sup> Across the country, people are hurting. Every day, our offices are fielding

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<sup>1</sup> “Questions About the CARES Act’s \$500 Billion Emergency Economic Stabilization Funds,” *Congressional Oversight Commission* (May 2020) at: [https://www.toomey.senate.gov/files/documents/COC%201st%20Report\\_05.18.2020.pdf](https://www.toomey.senate.gov/files/documents/COC%201st%20Report_05.18.2020.pdf)

hundreds of calls and messages from constituents who, through no fault of their own, are in dire need of financial assistance to pay for essentials like rent, gas, and groceries.

We appreciate that the IRS has gone to great lengths to implement the EIP program and distribute funds to eligible individuals as quickly as possible, while also attempting to minimize fraud. The scope of these efforts is particularly notable given the IRS's historic underfunding. Congress has reduced the agency's budget by 20 percent over the past decade. In that same period, the number of full-time IRS staff decreased by 22 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Given the significant hurdles that the IRS faces in overseeing the implementation of the EIP program, we request the following information so that we may better-assess the IRS's capacity to carry out the directives contained in the CARES Act:

1. Weekly updates on the status of EIP program implementation. Those updates should include, to date: the number of payments that have been cashed by the recipient, the number of payments that have been mailed by the IRS, and the percentage and number of payments that were sent through each method of disbursement, including paper checks, direct deposit payments, and prepaid debit cards;
2. The number and associated percentage of IRS staff tasked solely with implementing the EIP program;
3. The number of calls received by IRS telephone operators on the topic of missing stimulus checks—along with the number and associated percentages of calls returned by the IRS;
4. Aside from underfunding and associated understaffing, any additional hurdles the IRS is facing that are contributing to the delay in EIP program implementation; and
5. The amount of additional funding needed by the IRS in order to process and deliver all remaining stimulus checks no later than July 15th.

As Members of Congress, our responsibilities lie not only in creating programs like EIP but also in overseeing their implementation. For weeks, our constituents have used the appropriate channels to inquire as to the status of these payments. Those inquiries have been ignored.

The relief programs created in the CARES Act are time-sensitive, as indicated by the speed with which the legislature drafted and enacted this law—along with the historic funding levels that the

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<sup>2</sup> Sarah Skidmore Sell, "Underfunded IRS struggles to send refunds, answer calls," *AP* (January 2020) at: <https://apnews.com/aad7a3baaf338272c157bae07668ed43>

law authorized. We ask that the IRS provide updates to the American people with the same degree of urgency.

We look forward to your response, which we hope to receive no later than June 30th.

Very Truly Yours,

KATIE PORTER  
Member of Congress

RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY  
Member of Congress

BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER  
Member of Congress

TJ COX  
Member of Congress

PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress

ED CASE  
Member of Congress

DEB HAALAND  
Member of Congress

ZOE LOFGREN  
Member of Congress

GILBERT R. CISNEROS,  
JR.  
Member of Congress

AYANNA PRESSLEY  
Member of Congress

DAVE LOEBSACK  
Member of Congress

RAUL RUIZ, M.D.  
Member of Congress

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, III  
Member of Congress

JARED HUFFMAN  
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ROSA L. DELAURO  
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JACKIE SPEIER  
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ROBIN L. KELLY  
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KATHERINE CLARK  
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ABBY FINKENAUER  
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DENNY HECK  
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JAMIE RASKIN  
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NORMA J. TORRES  
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RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
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JERROLD NADLER  
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RICK LARSEN  
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JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
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JOHN B. LARSON  
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SHARICE L. DAVIDS  
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HENRY C. "HANK"  
JOHNSON, JR.  
Member of Congress

BETTY MCCOLLUM  
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