

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 5, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20220

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

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

We write today urging the Department of Treasury (Treasury) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to heighten efforts to deliver remaining Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) to our constituents as quickly as possible. Although EIPs were authorized by the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* more than four months ago, millions of EIPs have gone unclaimed. This emergency relief belongs in the pockets of struggling Americans.

The COVID-19 pandemic has come at a great cost to many Americans, but undoubtedly has had the hardest impact on low-income families, seniors, rural communities, and communities of color. Even prior to the onset of the pandemic, four in ten Americans did not have the cash on hand to meet an unexpected \$400 expense. Given the level of economic uncertainty brought about by the pandemic, Congress took action in passing the *CARES Act*, which authorized historic economic relief in the form of EIPs for most Americans.

Much to the credit of staff at Treasury and the IRS, in just a few short weeks, EIPs were arriving in taxpayers' mailboxes and checking accounts via direct deposit. Last week, we were pleased to see the National Taxpayer Advocate announce the IRS has committed to correct EIPs in certain scenarios, including for taxpayers who did not receive a payment for a qualifying child or taxpayers who may have received a lower payment due to a math error.

While these efforts deserve commendation, the fact remains that too many Americans have been left behind and have yet to receive their benefit. This population includes filers who did not receive payment for eligible dependents; those who may not file taxes—including very low-income individuals and homeless individuals; and those that lack access to a computer or the internet. Some of these Americans face a significant barrier in their ability to file a simple tax return online if they are not eligible to receive an automatic payment.

Figures released in June by the IRS show nearly 6 million EIPs have gone to Illinoisans totaling just under \$10 billion and we appreciate the efforts of the IRS to ensure these payments were issued in a timely manner. Unfortunately, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, as many as 392,000 adults and children in Illinois will not receive their EIP automatically, amounting to \$401 million in unclaimed aid. Without enhanced efforts from Treasury and the IRS, this aid may go unclaimed entirely or be delayed to 2020 tax returns.

Our offices continue to hear from Illinoisans who are eligible for an EIP but have yet to receive a payment. Sadly, many taxpayers that are having trouble obtaining their EIP have no place to turn for guidance, recourse, or technical assistance. Only five percent of those calling

into the IRS EIP hotline were successfully able to reach IRS staff. Further, it can take weeks to receive a response to inquiries submitted to the IRS's mailbox for Congressional offices.

Unfortunately, last week, the Taxpayer Advocate Service said it has been unable to assist taxpayers in addressing EIP concerns due to limited IRS operations. Despite consistent efforts from Republicans to starve the IRS of critical funding and support, we have long been a proponents of providing the IRS with the resources required to be effective, efficient, and fair in administering and enforcing our nation's tax code. We request that you leverage the resources and information at your disposal and redouble your efforts to collaborate with the necessary agencies to get this relief into the hands of those who need it the most. Time is of the essence and we hope that you will act quickly and decisively in addressing our concerns.

We will continue to work to provide the necessary resources so the IRS can better meet the economic needs of the most vulnerable in a more timely manner, and we urge you to do your part to ensure all remaining EIPs are issued as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and time-sensitive issue.

Sincerely,



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator