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April 27, 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 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig,

I write to ask the Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to work to ensure Economic Impact Payments (EIP) are available quickly to all Americans, even those without access to the internet.

The CARES Act called for recovery rebates of up to \$1200 per adult and \$500 per child, which are being distributed by the IRS to eligible taxpayers who have filed their 2018 or 2019 tax returns. I appreciate the quick work of Treasury and the IRS to begin getting these payments out to individuals via direct deposit. I also appreciate your efforts to provide the Economic Impact Payments to those who receive Social Security benefits without requiring them to file a tax return.

The direct payments included in the CARES Act have provided important support for the tens of millions of Americans who have received them, but there is concern that those who have not provided direct deposit information may not receive this critical assistance for months. To make matters worse, these constituents are disproportionately more vulnerable populations, who are likely at greater risk from COVID-19.

The Federal Communications Commission's most recent broadband status report found that more than 20 million Americans lack access to high-speed internet. In addition, due to issues with those maps, the true number is far higher. While the COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the urgency of working to get internet access to all Americans, already one of my priorities, that project cannot be completed overnight, and my constituents need assistance now. However, without access to the internet, these people may be unable to provide the information required to receive their rebate.

In addition, while I appreciate the website that was created to allow people to submit information and check on the status of their payment, that portal is unavailable to my constituents who lack internet access. This limitation was illustrated last week when Social Security recipients with dependents under the age of 17 needed to submit information through that portal within two days in order to receive rebates for those dependents. Many constituents were unaware or otherwise unable to submit that information in time and are now uncertain of when they may be able to receive these rebates for their children or grandchildren. I urge the Treasury and IRS to work to establish an additional period of time when my constituents can submit information about their dependents in order to receive this important assistance soon.

I've also heard from many constituents, especially older Iowans in rural areas, asking how they are supposed to submit any information via a web portal when they lack access to the internet. While I strongly support the IRS continuing its policy of not making outgoing phone calls to prevent abuse by scammers, I ask the IRS to create a dedicated phone line for Americans to provide the basic information required to receive direct deposit. Without the ability to do this, my constituents will be unable to get their payment for months or may have the payment sent to the wrong person.

In the interim, I also ask that the IRS work with congressional offices and other public officials that employ caseworkers and constituent services managers to establish confidential and expedient processes that would allow them to assist individuals who are unable to access the portal directly. Congressional caseworkers are already outfitted to assist with Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits claims – and should be allowed to help constituents without access to the internet until such time as the IRS can provide its own alternative.

The CARES Act directed the Treasury to conduct a public awareness campaign to raise awareness among those who did not file a return in 2018 or 2019, and I would ask you to ensure that those without internet access are able to access their Economic Impact Payments.

While I hope that these efforts to assist Americans can be accomplished without legislative action, please let me know if additional funding or other actions from Congress are needed. I am eager to assist in helping our constituents receive this aid and must ensure that those without internet access are not left behind.

Thank you for your consideration,



Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress