

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: presses IRS commissioner for status updates regarding economic impact payments & tax refunds

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Washington, D.C.— Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) sent a [letter](#) to United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner Charles P. Rettig, asking him to address the numerous barriers the residents of Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District are encountering in determining the status of their economic impact payments and tax refunds.

Congressman Sensenbrenner: "I have been made aware of several concerns as it relates to the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) ability to meet the needs of my constituents during the Coronavirus pandemic. Every day, people from Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District contact me searching for help regarding their economic impact payments or tax refunds. With the economic uncertainty plaguing the nation, I expect the IRS to do everything it can to assist and serve the American people."

The full text of the letter to the IRS Commissioner is embedded below. A PDF copy of the letter, as delivered, can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

Dear Commissioner Rettig:

I have been made aware of several concerns as it relates to the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) ability to meet the needs of my constituents during the Coronavirus pandemic. Every day, people from Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District contact me searching for help regarding their economic impact payments or tax refunds. With the economic uncertainty plaguing the nation, I expect the IRS to do everything it can to assist and serve the American people.

I appreciate the need to maintain the health and safety of the IRS workforce. But with no immediate end to the pandemic in sight, it is vital that the IRS adapt to meet the demands and needs of taxpaying Americans. For instance, I am troubled by the current lack of phone assistance available to taxpayers and tax professionals.[1] Not having live people answering questions exacerbates the confusion and frustration with the IRS. Additionally, the loss of Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC) has limited American's ability to get answers to their tax questions.[2]

For most tax questions, the IRS has directed individuals to use the tools available at IRS.gov. This includes searching for answers like "Where's My Refund" and "Get My [Economic Impact] Payment." However, my constituents have encountered problems with this system as well.

A specific problem in using the website seems to be due to certain postal addressing practices that are unique to Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. Many areas of my district use an alphanumeric address (e.g. N6W23001 Bluemound Rd).[3] In order to access the tools at IRS.gov, a taxpayer is required to first verify their identity by entering several pieces of information, including their address. Because of the numerous possible combinations for inputting an alphanumeric address, many taxpayers are being locked out from the website after only three failed attempts. This leaves them unable to check their payment status and to provide their direct deposit information in order to most quickly receive their Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic impact payments.

The lack of clear guidance from IRS on how to input these addresses, as well as the unavailability of any telephone assistance, has added to the confusion and frustration faced by citizens in desperate need of the money provided by Congress.

While only part of Congress's overall approach to addressing the damage caused by the Coronavirus, the economic impact payments are a very visible piece of our response. Millions of Americans, upon hearing the news that these checks were included in the CARES Act, have been eagerly awaiting their payments to ease the burden caused by the pandemic.

I encourage you to resolve any outstanding issues related to serving the American people during this trying time. There cannot be any undue delays in getting the economic impact payments and refunds out the door. But just as important, taxpayers need to be able to access accurate information and have their tax questions answered. It is up to you to ensure the IRS is adequately meeting the needs of the American people.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR

Member of Congress

[1] <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-operations-during-covid-19-mission-critical-functions-continue> (accessed 5.12.2020)

[2] Id.

[3] https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apd_004.htm

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