

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
April 19, 2016

The Honorable John Koskinen
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Koskinen:

I write today to relay concerns expressed by my constituents regarding the difficulties they have experienced obtaining paper tax forms in recent filing seasons, and to advocate for streamlining the process by which taxpayers may obtain hard copy forms and instructions. While I do understand that budget constraints have reduced the capacity of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to maintain prior levels of taxpayer service, I am hopeful that a combination of increased IRS appropriations and targeted deployment of resources will be able to restore public confidence in the IRS's ability to support citizens' voluntary tax compliance.

While I have supported efforts to ensure the IRS has adequate resources to support taxpayer services, simply restoring cut funding will not be enough to address concerns of many rural and elderly taxpayers in Maine. Due to recent efforts to improve efficiency and reduce printing costs, the IRS is inadvertently creating compliance hurdles for taxpayers who have difficulty accessing or using e-filing tools and other online resources. This is particularly true in Maine, which is the most rural state east of the Mississippi River and which has the highest median age of any state in the country, two characteristics that contribute to lower broadband adoption rates.¹ These barriers to e-filing, combined with declining access to in-person assistance due to the closure of the Lewiston, Maine Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC), mean that it is more important than ever to maintain and improve taxpayers' ability to have paper forms delivered by mail.

Therefore, I fully support the IRS's existing program that allows taxpayers to place orders for hard copy forms online and, crucially for rural and elderly citizens, by phone. I respectfully request that the IRS not only continue to operate this system but also improve its functionality by allowing taxpayers to place automatically-recurring orders for a given set of tax forms and instructions, to be annually mailed as soon as they are available for up to five filing seasons. This change would render the program more convenient for the many paper filers who expect to use the same set of forms each year, and would likely offset a portion of its related

¹ Pew Research Center, December 21, 2015, "Home Broadband 2015" Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/2015/Home-Broadband-2015>

mailing costs by reducing IRS labor costs at TACs and call centers and by increasing voluntary tax law compliance rates among filers who prefer or require the use of paper forms.

I would appreciate your prompt consideration of this request, so that it might be implemented in time for use during the 2017 filing season and beyond. Should you have any questions about this specific request, or if you would like to discuss the broader issue of promoting voluntary tax compliance among rural and elderly taxpayers, please direct your staff to contact Aisha Woodward or Will Woodworth in my office at 202-224-5344.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angus King" followed by a horizontal line.

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Jacob Lew, Secretary, Department of the Treasury