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Congress of the United States
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September 23, 2020

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Commissioner Rettig,

As taxpayers on Staten Island face the possibility of the President's payroll tax cut affecting their 2021 tax payments, and prepare for drastic changes to their tax returns, I urge you to establish an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Taxpayer Assistance Center on Staten Island. Staten Islanders have been ignored for far too long, and this sensible step towards equity is needed before next year's tax season.

Due to the extensive financial changes implemented this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers, or TACs, will be incredibly vital for my constituents in New York's 11th Congressional District in the coming months, particularly for low-income constituents unable to access paid tax assistance. As you know, your agency ensured that those who took their required minimum distribution (RMD) from qualifying retirement savings plans in January 2020 were granted flexibility, in addition to the 60-day rollover period Congress passed in the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. Navigating the tax implications of these distributions will likely require assistance, and a local TAC can stand to assist. Coronavirus relief legislation will also allow taxpayers to reduce their income via charitable contributions—with a letter of acknowledgement and documentation needed, taxpayers should have access to free, federal assistance to avoid large tax bills, and to avoid forgoing earned relief. As the Small Business Administration releases new guidance on Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Advances, and unforgiven Paycheck Protection Program funds, small business owners will need to be doubly prepared in 2021. Compounding those concerns with the large number of Staten Island taxpayers eligible to receive a tax credit based on their Economic Impact Payments and new adjusted gross incomes, the case for a TAC is no longer optional, but is absolutely necessary.

In New York City, Staten Island is currently the only borough without a brick and mortar IRS TAC, with the closest TAC located in Downtown Brooklyn, or in Lower Manhattan. In June of 2013, the TAC on Staten Island permanently closed as part of your agency's rent reduction efforts, leaving no full-service office option on the entire island. This is not only an outrageous omission by the IRS, but it could further deepen the financial inequality faced by constituents in my district. After speaking with National Treasury Employees Union members, it is clear that the other TACs in the city are not sufficient to handle the needs of my constituents—a fact that will be undeniable next tax season unless we address this need now. What's more, expanding the TAC network in New York City will ease the burden of IRS staff who are currently handling the overflow from Staten Island taxpayers. While I understand that this sensible solution has been considered in the past, it must be implemented as soon as possible.

I urge you to work with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin to address this gap for taxpayers on Staten Island—these taxpayers should not be an afterthought, and should be given the due attention from federal agencies that they deserve. I look forward to working with you on solutions to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'mro', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Max Rose
Member of Congress