

STEVE COHEN

9TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE
2104 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-3265
FAX: (202) 225-5663

167 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 369
MEMPHIS, TN 38103

TELEPHONE: (901) 544-4131
FAX: (901) 544-4329

WWW.COHEN.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4209

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIR – CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND
CIVIL LIBERTIES
COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, AND THE
INTERNET
CRIME, TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

AVIATION
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
RAILROADS, PIPELINES AND HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE
AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEES:

INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE (U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

September 23, 2020

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

Dear Commissioner Rettig,

We are writing to express our concern that almost nine million Americans who are eligible for economic impact payments (EIPs) – the majority of whom have incomes that are too low to require a tax filing obligation – are set to be excluded from this much-needed aid. Therefore, we request that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) extend its deadline of October 15 for non-tax filers to submit their information on the IRS website. We also urge the IRS to broaden its outreach efforts beyond notification letters to ensure each eligible American receives their payment.

The IRS should be making every possible effort to ensure these individuals receive this payment, and the upcoming October 15, 2020 deadline will prohibit millions of Americans from doing so. We were concerned to learn that the IRS recently announced it will send letters to non-filers beginning September 24, a mere three weeks before its October 15 deadline. This extraordinarily limited window creates a barrier to access that will be exacerbated by delays in the U.S. Postal

Service¹ and widespread lack of internet access among low-income Americans.² The IRS has possessed the information it needs to contact these individuals for months, and yet it inexplicably decided to begin mailing notification letters right before its own deadline.

Not only is the IRS's notification period too short, but its outreach campaign is inadequate. The IRS should employ a number of methods to spread awareness of the need to claim the EIPs, including, but not limited to, sending follow-up letters, calling individuals, and creating a coordinated outreach plan with state-administered programs such as SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The IRS must make every effort to ensure these individuals are aware of their eligibility for an EIP.

Since that has not been the case up to this point, we urge the IRS to extend its deadline of October 15 and to expand its outreach efforts to non-tax filers. We cannot allow nine million eligible Americans to be left out of a robust economic support program simply because of lack of awareness. While the EIPs have provided crucial assistance to many Americans amid a devastating global pandemic, the IRS's work is far from finished.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

¹ Todd Frankel, "Postal problems could continue despite suspension of policies blamed for mail delays," *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/19/postal-problems-could-continue-despite-suspension-policies-blamed-mail-delays/>

² Linda Poon, "There Are Far More Americans Without Broadband Access than Previously Thought," *Bloomberg*, February 19, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-19/where-the-u-s-underestimates-the-digital-divide>

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

