

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6966

To require that the offices of the Internal Revenue Service are staffed with employees to answer phone calls during business hours and quickly confirm receipt of hard mail tax returns, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2022

Ms. WILD (for herself and Mr. MELJER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To require that the offices of the Internal Revenue Service are staffed with employees to answer phone calls during business hours and quickly confirm receipt of hard mail tax returns, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Better Service for Tax-
5 payers Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Internal Revenue Service administers
2 and enforces the Federal tax laws of the United
3 States and should seek to continually improve cus-
4 tomer service based on taxpayer needs and feedback.

5 (2) The people of the United States deserve a
6 communication system with the Internal Revenue
7 Service that is reliable, efficient, accessible, and easy
8 to navigate across multiple channels.

9 (3) Many agencies, offices, programs, and Fed-
10 eral employees provide excellent customer experi-
11 ences to taxpayers. However, many aspects of the
12 Federal Government still fall short on delivering the
13 customer experience that individuals have come to
14 expect from the private sector.

15 (4) According to the 2020 American Customer
16 Satisfaction Index Benchmark, which ranges from 0
17 to 100, the Internal Revenue Service scored at or
18 below average compared to customer satisfaction
19 with other Federal agencies. The average score from
20 individual e-filers was a 76, small business and self-
21 employed filers gave an average score of 67, and
22 large business and international filers and individual
23 paper filers gave an average score of 59.

24 (5) The amount of funding spent on taxpayer
25 assistance and education decreased by \$5,000,000

1 between fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2020. The
2 number of employees providing these services
3 dropped by 29 percent, and the number of customer
4 service representatives decreased by 41 percent.

5 (6) The Internal Revenue Service spent nearly
6 15 percent less during fiscal year 2020 when com-
7 pared to fiscal year 2010 in examinations and collec-
8 tions. During this time period, the number of Inter-
9 nal Revenue Service employees working in this area
10 declined by 32 percent and the number of Internal
11 Revenue Service employees working as revenue
12 agents declined by 40 percent.

13 (7) Completing the hiring process for prospec-
14 tive Internal Revenue Service employees can take the
15 agency approximately six to eight months.

16 (8) Taxpayers will experience an easier, clearer,
17 and quicker tax filing system if the Internal Revenue
18 Service provides more reliable and efficient customer
19 service and taxpayer support services.

20 (9) To improve services to taxpayers, the Inter-
21 nal Revenue Service should work across its depart-
22 ments, leverage updated technology to track tax re-
23 turns, and enhance the customer service experience.

24 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

25 It is the sense of Congress that—

1 (1) the Internal Revenue Service should im-
2 prove its taxpayer support services and customer
3 service experiences for the people of the United
4 States. To do this, the Internal Revenue Service
5 must develop an efficient system that enables tax-
6 payers to track the process of their tax submissions
7 and receive timely support when submitting an in-
8 quiry to the Internal Revenue Service,

9 (2) adequate funding is needed to ensure that
10 Internal Revenue Service workforce, staffing levels,
11 and technological resources can provide the public
12 with improved customer service and problem resolu-
13 tion. A significant portion of Internal Revenue Serv-
14 ice funding should be spent on increasing the num-
15 ber of employees in taxpayer-facing positions, includ-
16 ing employees working to address taxpayer questions
17 and as customer service staff,

18 (3) Congress should appropriate the funding
19 necessary to enable the IRS to achieve these im-
20 proved standards for taxpayer services and support,

21 (4) the Internal Revenue Service should accel-
22 erate its hiring timeline for onboarding new employ-
23 ees, to enable an easy career transition for incoming
24 employees and ensure the Internal Revenue Service

1 is not losing prospective employees because of a slow
2 hiring process, and

3 (5) the Internal Revenue Service should expedite its ongoing efforts to develop and expand electronic portals, through which taxpayers can check
4 the status of their tax returns and submit inquiries
5 to the Internal Revenue Service.

8 **SEC. 4. TAXPAYER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.**

9 (a) TELEPHONE AVAILABILITY.—The Commissioner
10 of Internal Revenue shall ensure that each office and division of the Internal Revenue Service is staffed with employees to answer phone calls during standard business
11 hours, including 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Fridays, excluding Federal holidays.

12 (b) MAIL SUBMISSIONS.—The Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall ensure that within 15 business days
13 of receipt of a mailed tax return, the Internal Revenue Service shall acknowledge receipt of such tax return by
14 mailing the taxpayer a hard copy response letter, which
15 shall include a phone number for the taxpayer to call with
16 questions and a statement notifying the taxpayer that
17 their tax return is being processed by the Internal Revenue Service.

1 **SEC. 5. SERVICE REQUIREMENT IMPROVEMENT REPORT.**

2 Not later than 365 days after the date of the enact-
3 ment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Commis-
4 sioner of Internal Revenue shall provide an annual report
5 to Congress on the status of its efforts to reach the goals
6 of improving services to taxpayers. Such report shall in-
7 clude specific progress updates relating to the telephone
8 availability requirements of section 4(a) and the mail sub-
9 missions requirements of section 4(b), and may include re-
10 quests for additional support from Congress, as needed,
11 to improve service to taxpayers by the Internal Revenue
12 Service.

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