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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

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July 22, 2021

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig  
Internal Revenue Service  
1111 Constitution Ave NE  
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Commissioner Rettig:

I write to applaud the efforts of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and its workforce for its remarkable efforts in sending \$15 billion in advanced Child Tax Credit (CTC) payments to the families of nearly 60 million American children, and urge the agency to prioritize improvements that will ensure the most underserved communities can easily and efficiently take advantage of the program. Achieving our goal of cutting child poverty in half through the expanded CTC depends on reaching these communities.

Improvements to the IRS Non-filer Sign-up Tool are critical. The portal is not designed to work on mobile devices, as intended by law, and has not been translated into languages other than English. While I deeply appreciate the tireless work of the dedicated staff at the IRS to quickly stand up this critical resource, I am concerned that technological and design constraints on the portal will prevent America's most vulnerable communities – those who make so little income they previously did not file – from even applying for this important funding. This is because, as has become all too apparent over the course of the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis, many of the most vulnerable families in this country only access the internet via their mobile devices. Yet, the portal does not account for this reality, and it is not optimized to work on mobile devices, or in languages other than English.

I am especially disappointed in the portal because mobile device optimization for consumer-facing government websites is explicitly required by law. The *Connected Government Act*, which passed into law January 2018, requires new and redesigned agency websites to be mobile-friendly. While I know the IRS worked with private-sector partners Intuit and the Free File Foundation to build the non-filer portal, which is not hosted on a government domain, the intent of this law is clear.

1. Did the IRS use contractual requirements to mandate the development of mobile friendly websites with translations into more than just English? If not, why not?
2. Was an explicit decision made either by the IRS or the private-sector partners to not create an accessible website?

Recognizing that technological capacity is not the core competency for many federal agencies, the federal government provides a number of resources to help agencies and departments comply

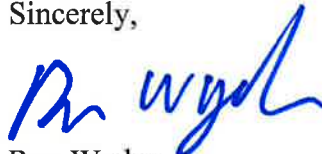
with this requirement, including Technology Modernization Funds (which have newly updated and much more flexible repayment rules for agencies), experts at the General Services Administration's Technology Transformation Service, and the free expert services of the U.S. Digital Service.

3. Has the IRS taken advantage of these services in the past either generally, or specifically for the CTC program? If not, why not?
4. What additional resources does the IRS need to fix this issue and what is a reasonable time frame in which to expect these fixes to be made?

If this inadequacy is not rectified, millions of American families could be denied the opportunity to provide a more secure future for their children and break the cycle of poverty for so many. As such, I urge the IRS to direct Intuit and the Free File Alliance to update the existing Non-filer Sign-up Tool, or find a different solution, to ensure this country's most vulnerable working families, including those who do not speak English or only have a mobile device, have access to the Child Tax Credit.

I thank you for your attention to this important request, and I stand ready to assist as needed.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance