

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2019

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

Ms. Dietra Grant
Director
Customer Assistance, Relationships and Education
Wage and Investment Division,
Internal Revenue Service
401 W. Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Dear Commissioner Rettig and Director Grant,

We are writing to express concern about the temporary closing of the Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC) in Bangor, Maine. We urge you to reject this decision, which would exacerbate the service problems that residents in rural Maine already experience with the recent closures of other TACs in the area.

More than ten percent of the Second Congressional District, an estimated 71,870 people, reside in Aroostook County. This area is the largest county in the country east of the Rocky Mountains, and yet now finds itself without any taxpayer advocate services. Some residents in our state are expected to travel over 200 miles to Bangor for tax assistance. With the recent announcement of a temporary closure of the Bangor TAC office, there is now not a single staffed TAC in all of Maine's Second Congressional District.

Some of Maine's most disadvantaged counties rely on Bangor as their primary service center, and eliminating this staffed office would create a real hardship for hard-working rural Mainers. Many of these communities have limited Internet and broadband access. Residents of Maine's most rural county - Piscataquis County - regularly use Bangor as their major service center, and the easternmost county in the United States - Washington County - would see their commute to a TAC nearly double.

The next several weeks will be a time when many Americans will have questions regarding their tax filings, compounded by new tax laws that are being implemented for the first time. I understand that finding qualified staff is a challenge, however, it is unreasonable that at the peak

time in tax filing season, people with tax related issues would have to travel upwards of 275 miles one way simply to meet with an IRS professional dedicated to advocating for the taxpayer.

Therefore, we request that you reject this temporary closure of the TAC services in Bangor. We also hope that you will work with our offices to find a long-term solution that would reopen a permanent, staffed TAC in Aroostook County. In addition, please provide us answers to the following questions by March 29.

1. How does the agency plan on providing sufficient services for rural Mainers who have intermittent access to high speed internet services?
2. Is the IRS able to reallocate staff from other offices to provide assistance with filing taxes? If not, are these residents eligible for an extension on filing a return for their taxes?
3. What remote services can be provided to rural residents and has the agency set up any method to measure the quality of those services compared to face-to-face services?
4. Please provide the volume of services and number of users at each of the following TACs going back to 2008: Presque Isle, Bangor, Lewiston, Augusta and South Portland?

Thank you for considering this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us or have your staff contact Dan Jenkins, Dan.Jenkins@mail.house.gov (Golden); Owen Mahan, Owen_Mahan@aging.senate.gov (Collins); Alex Porter; and Alex_Porter@king.senate.gov (King) regarding any decisions you may come to relating to the TAC in Bangor and in Presque Isle.

Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr
United States Senator