

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

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

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

We write to request information on the status of Economic Impact Payments from the *CARES Act*, specifically relating to the \$500 payment per eligible dependent.

The *CARES Act* authorized the distribution of \$1,200 payments to qualifying individuals and an additional payment of \$500 for each dependent child under the age of 17. We commend the IRS for disbursing over \$207 billion in payments to 130 million people in less than 30 days; however, according to recent reports,¹ despite having filed tax returns, some eligible recipients have yet to receive the entirety of the payment for which they are eligible. Specifically, a number of parents and guardians have stated that they have not received the payment of \$500 for each dependent child.

On Wednesday April 29, 2020, the IRS posted the following guidance on its website:

If you did not receive the full amount to which you believe you are entitled, you will be able to claim the additional amount when you file your 2020 tax return.

The IRS subsequently stated that individuals who did not file a tax return for 2018 or 2019 but receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits have until Tuesday May 5, 2020 to enter their information online to receive the \$500 payment per dependent child. Those who miss the deadline to register, as the IRS states, must wait until next year to collect the \$500 payment when they file a 2020 tax return. Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Railroad Retirement recipients were given an earlier April 22 deadline that allowed only 48 hours to enter dependent information online. To have met these timelines, eligible recipients must not only have been aware of them, but must have easy access to internet services to register for the benefits, which they often do not.

We know that many of the constraints that you face are due to administrative difficulties caused by a decade of underinvestment in IRS. We also appreciate your work to get the \$1,200

¹ Singletary, Michelle. "IRS tells parents still waiting for their \$500 stimulus child benefit it won't arrive until next year." Washington Post, 1 May 2020. Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/01/irs-tells-parents-still-waiting-their-500-stimulus-child-benefit-it-wont-arrive-until-next-year/>

payments directly and automatically to recipients of Social Security, SSDI, Railroad Retirement, SSI, and VA benefits without having to file tax returns.

However, we are concerned that individuals receiving SSI, VA benefits, Social Security, Railroad Retirement, or Social Security Disability Insurance who do not receive their dependent payments in a timely manner will face significant hardship. Many of these individuals were already struggling prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and are even more financially strained now. Given these concerns, please respond to the following requests:

1. Has the IRS determined whether some households who filed a tax return for tax years 2018 or 2019 have not received the full payment to which they are entitled, and if so, why? Is the IRS taking any steps to correct this issue to ensure these households receive their full payment in 2020?
2. What steps has the Treasury and IRS taken, or what steps do your agencies plan to take, to respond to bipartisan requests from Congress to explore ways to provide \$500 dependent payments to Social Security, SSI, and VA beneficiaries who missed the April 22 and May 5 filing deadlines?
3. Please provide the best available data on the total number and amount of \$500 per-dependent payments that have been received, are in the process of being delivered, and have not yet been claimed, broken down into each of the following groups:
 - a. Taxpayers who have filed 2018 or 2019 tax returns;
 - b. Taxpayers who have not filed 2018 or 2019 tax returns but are recipients of Social Security, SSDI, Railroad Retirement, SSI, or Veterans benefits; and,
 - c. Taxpayers who have not filed and are not recipients of Social Security, SSDI, Railroad Retirement, SSI, or Veterans benefits.

We look forward to working with the Department of Treasury and the IRS to ensure that all eligible recipients receive their \$500 payments per dependent as quickly as possible to help alleviate the severe economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator