

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.
FIFTH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CRIME, TERRORISM, HOMELAND
SECURITY, AND INVESTIGATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4905
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The Honorable John Koskinen
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Commissioner Koskinen:

I am writing about a matter of great concern to me and the taxpayers of my district. As you know, in December of last year, an additional \$290 million was provided to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for taxpayer services in the FY16 Consolidated Appropriations Act. I remain concerned that many of the problems that plagued the agency's taxpayer service in 2015 will continue in 2016. The IRS recently told Congress and taxpayers to again expect wait times before people can get through, "since the additional funding is still less than needed."

During testimony last year, you admitted that your agency reallocated millions of dollars from taxpayer services to fund your role in implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). All this while many honest taxpayers were struggling to find assistance with their tax questions, particularly over the phone. In fact, last year only 38 percent of taxpayers who wanted to speak with an IRS assistor were able to reach one, and those lucky enough to get through had to wait for 30 minutes on the phone. Unfortunately, service over the phone was not the only service lacking. Your agency also struggled with providing timely walk-in assistance, correspondence overage rates, and online customer service security. In all, 2015 was a customer service nightmare for taxpayers.

Given your agency's history of reallocating funds, I am requesting a full accounting of the extra funds appropriated to your agency this year for taxpayer services. With tax season in full swing, I expect a plan has been laid out and implementation is in progress. It is critical that the IRS share its plan with Congress about what it intends to do to improve various categories of customer service, and how it intends to spend its money to address these issues.

I remind you, the IRS exists to "provide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to *all*." I expect the money appropriated for customer service be spent accordingly. We owe it to taxpayers to assist them in fulfilling their obligation to file their taxes correctly and on time. Please provide a full accounting of how you intend to spend the additional funds by March 3, 2016.

Thank you for your prompt response to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress