

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7440

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a plan to improve customer service and establish new modes of communication with the public, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 7, 2022

Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma (for herself, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. MELJER, and Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a plan to improve customer service and establish new modes of communication with the public, 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 “IRS Customer Service
5 and Modernization Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Internal Revenue Service is facing un-
2 precedented challenges following the outbreak of the
3 COVID–19 and the Federal response which included
4 significant changes to the Internal Revenue Code.

5 (2) Since that time, the Internal Revenue Serv-
6 ice has been under tremendous strain with rapidly
7 growing workloads and significant staffing chal-
8 lenges.

9 (3) At the beginning of the 2021 tax season,
10 the Internal Revenue Service still had approximately
11 11.7 million backlogged returns from tax year 2020,
12 and it took the IRS until June of 2021 to get
13 through its 2019 backlog.

14 (4) As of December 2021, the Internal Revenue
15 Service still had a backlog of approximately 6 million
16 unprocessed individual tax returns.

17 (5) Processing delays at the Internal Revenue
18 Service have a disproportionately negative impact on
19 low-income Americans.

20 (6) In fiscal year 2021, the Internal Revenue
21 Service received approximately 282 million phone
22 calls, of which only 11 percent or about 32 million
23 were actually answered by customer service rep-
24 resentatives.

1 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
2 gress that the American people deserve an Internal Rev-
3 enue Service that is responsive, efficient, and precise in
4 its actions, and the Internal Revenue Service must develop
5 a corrective action plan to address key deficiencies.

6 **SEC. 3. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN REQUIRED TO ADDRESS**
7 **KEY DEFICIENCIES.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
9 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the
10 Treasury shall develop a written corrective active plan to
11 achieve average return of tax processing times that do not
12 exceed the average of such processing times for returns
13 of tax relating to the 5-year period ending on December
14 31, 2019. Such corrective active plan shall include the fol-
15 lowing:

16 (1) Quarterly goals and benchmarks to achieve
17 such processing times not later than the beginning
18 of the processing period for returns of tax relating
19 to taxable years ending on or after December 31,
20 2023.

21 (2) A list of technological upgrades that would
22 improve processing times of returns of tax.

23 (3) A list of human resource policy changes
24 that would improve processing of returns of tax, in-
25 cluding—

1 (A) a list of ways to increase productivity
2 of staff working remotely as the result of
3 COVID-19, and

4 (B) a strategy to improve recruitment and
5 retention.

6 (4) An estimate of the cost of maintaining and
7 operating existing taxpayer information processing
8 technology.

9 (5) An estimate of the total annual cost of pro-
10 tecting the computer systems of the Internal Rev-
11 enue Service from cyber intrusion.

12 (6) An analysis on how much the Internal Rev-
13 enue Service has paid in interest to taxpayers as a
14 result of backlogs in processing returns of tax that
15 were submitted after March 13, 2020.

16 (7) A plan to address backlogs in the Error
17 Resolution System to reduce the need for manual
18 processing, including—

19 (A) rapid identification of math errors and
20 immediate notification to the taxpayer,

21 (B) improvements to processing times for
22 taxpayer correspondence, and

23 (C) an analysis of options to improve tax-
24 payer correspondence to include expanding tax-

(9) An analysis of options to improve taxpayer access to in-person meetings with the Taxpayer Advocate Service and the Internal Revenue Service, particularly in areas with significant backlogs of requests for such meetings.

(b) PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—

The Secretary of the Treasury shall publish the corrective active plan required under subsection (a) on the website of the Internal Revenue Service and shall submit such corrective active plan to the Committees on Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Oversight and Reform of the House of Representatives and to the Committees on Finance and Appropriations of the Senate.

21 SEC. 4. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE MODERNIZATION OF
22 COMMUNICATIONS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall improve communication with the public by—

1 (1) expanding the capacity of the practitioner
2 priority service to respond to certified public ac-
3 countants acting on behalf of a client,

4 (2) establishing a chat function on the website
5 of the Internal Revenue Service on which a taxpayer
6 can get a quick answer to a basic question that does
7 not require the exchange of personally identifiable
8 information, and

9 (3) establishing an online scheduling tool to
10 allow taxpayers to schedule virtual meetings, phone
11 calls, and in-person meetings.

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