

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Charles Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Rettig:

We write today to urge the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to continue strengthening its efforts to protect Americans from fraud and identity theft, particularly related to COVID-19 stimulus payments provided by the bipartisan Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

As the IRS noted in a warning issued on April 2, 2020, scammers are targeting Americans with a “surge of calls and email phishing attempts about the Coronavirus, or COVID-19” that “can lead to tax-related fraud and identity theft.” These scams often involve criminals impersonating the IRS or suggesting that they can help get individuals their stimulus payments faster. Criminals ask for personal information in order to steal personal identities and stimulus payments. The IRS recommends that seniors be especially careful of these scams, as retirees are among criminals’ potential targets.

Properly authenticating Americans’ information is critical to ensuring that stimulus payments are not stolen from their intended recipients. In June 2018, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report (GAO-18-418) that examined the IRS’ efforts to reduce identity theft and authenticate the identity of taxpayers amid large-scale data breaches and attempted fraud. GAO’s report contained 11 recommendations to reduce identity theft and fraud, all of which the IRS has committed to adopting, though these recommendations are not yet entirely implemented. Acknowledging the extraordinary demands placed upon the IRS at this time, we urge you to ensure the implementation of the recommendations in GAO-18-418 as soon as possible.

We also urge you to develop fraud prevention strategies for the recently released *Non-filers: Enter Payment Info* and *Get My Payment* online tools, and to coordinate with the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission to educate Americans about preventing stimulus payment-specific fraud and to share information on identifying, reporting, and investigating stimulus payment-specific fraud.

Thank you for your attention to this letter and your commitment to protecting Americans from tax scams and fraud. We look forward to working with you on these matters.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator