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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

January 26, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20220

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

Dear Secretary Yellen and Commissioner Rettig:

Thank you for the work you are doing to process a second round of Economic Impact Payments for millions of Americans during one of the worst pandemics in modern history. While these efforts are commendable, I have heard from dozens of constituents who are unable to activate or use the debit card through which the payment is largely being issued. These problems disproportionately hurt seniors who are already struggling to pay bills and suffering from social isolation.

When my staff contacted the Office of Legislative Affairs, they were told there is no way to return the debit card in order to have the EIP issued through direct deposit or check, the same method many constituents received their first payment. In addition, IRS provided three methods by which constituents can transfer the money directly into their bank account yet, when many constituents attempt to do the transfer, they are told their personal information does not match that on file so my constituents are unable to complete the transaction.

I am aware that some of my colleagues have already contacted your about similar concerns in their districts as well. The IRS must ensure EIPs are routed to the American people in a timely manner. As such, I request the following steps be taken by the IRS to carry out its obligations to our constituents:

1. A full accounting of how many Americans received their second Economic Impact Payment by debit card and how many of those cards are yet to be a) activated and b) used.
2. Provide a method by which constituents may request either online, over the phone or by mail to have the unused portions of their Economic Impact Payment directly deposited into their bank account or mailed to them in the form of a paper check.

As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to ensure programs created to reduce the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are in fact implemented in a manner that achieves such outcome. I ask the IRS to show the same urgency in these matters as we did when passing COVID relief in December.

I look forward to your response,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Peters", with a stylized, flowing script.

Scott Peters
Member of Congress