



NEWS RELEASE

1750 H Street N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 572-5500

www.nteu.org

**For Immediate Release
July 18, 2005**

**Contact: Dina Long, Ext. 7058
Sheila McCormick, Ext. 7034
Mike Drapkin, Ext. 7011**

Large Group of House Members Tell IRS Head They ‘Expect’ Halt to TAC Closing Plan

Washington, D.C.—In a letter to the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), 69 members of the House of Representatives said they “expect” him to halt the proposed closing of a large number of Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) in line with House-approved language calling for a study of the impact of such a move.

President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), who is leading the fight against the IRS plan to close 68 TACs nationwide and institute other cutbacks in customer service, applauded the letter.

In approving the fiscal 2006 Treasury-Transportation Appropriations bill, Kelley said, “the House has made clear its intentions” to prevent the IRS from spending any money to close these vital facilities, at least until the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) reports on the impact of the plan. A Senate subcommittee will take up its version of the funding bill tomorrow.

The House members’ letter to IRS Commissioner Mark Everson said that if the IRS moves ahead with the plan, it would be acting “in direct conflict with Congress’ intent” to prevent it unless and until it gets more information about the impact on taxpayer compliance.

The largest contributing factor to the present \$300 billion gap between revenues owed but not collected is underreporting of income, the House members wrote, adding that “a great deal of

(MORE)

House Members Want IRS Plan Halted —Add One

underreporting is addressed by getting taxpayers to file more correct tax returns.”

While they agreed that stronger enforcement of tax laws is needed, the legislators described as “vital” the help IRS TAC employees provide “to law-abiding taxpayers who are trying to do nothing less than comply properly with the law.”

The TAC closings are part of an IRS plan to cut customer service by closing three of its telephone tax help call sites and curtailing by 15 hours a week the amount of time that such help is available to taxpayers. The goal is to force a growing number of taxpayers to the Internet for the help they need with their taxes.

President Kelley, along with the leaders of a number of public interest groups, has warned that these cutbacks—and particularly the closing of TACs—will have a disproportionate and severe impact on groups least likely to be able to compensate effectively for the loss of such help. These groups include the elderly, lower-income taxpayers, those who face language barriers and those either without access to or familiarity with the Internet.

In recent weeks, NTEU chapters around the country, often joined by local and federal officials, have held highly-visible public protests about the customer service cutbacks and the TAC closings. TIGTA itself, along with the IRS National Taxpayer Advocate, has publicly raised questions about the proposal.

NTEU is the largest independent federal union, representing 150,000 employees in 30 agencies and departments, including some 94,000 in the IRS.