



Helping Americans Deal with Democrats' IRS Tax Filing Disaster

Key Message: Americans should prepare for a tax shock. The Biden Administration and Congressional Democrats ignored the historic tax return backlog, instead demanding Congress create a dangerous bank surveillance scheme and fund 80,000 new IRS agents to unleash on American taxpayers.

Background: The Biden IRS is in crisis with a massive backlog of unprocessed tax returns, unanswered phone calls, and bureaucratic delays. You will likely encounter frustrated and angry constituents as this year's massive tax filing season disaster continues to spread. Here are the key details of Democrats' incompetent handling of the IRS backlog and some ways you can help your constituents navigate this latest Biden crisis.

- As of January 28, 2022, there were 23.7 million unprocessed tax returns and correspondence filed in 2021 and 2022.
- The IRS is still processing tax returns filed in April 2021 (for the 2020 tax year): Paper returns are processed in the order they are received.
- IRS call volume tripled from 2020 to 2021: As a result of this backlog, the IRS received a record 282 million phone calls in 2021 and was only able to answer 11 percent of those calls. In a normal year, IRS staff would work on backlogged returns and other correspondence when not answering phones. The current call volume leaves them no time to work on returns.

Republican Action:

- Since early 2021, House Republicans have been sounding the alarm and demanding answers from IRS officials about the backlog, call volume, and administration of complicated monthly Child Tax Credit payments.
- Republicans demand to know why the IRS hasn't spent over \$1 billion in unused agency funding – while Democrats call for more and more money for the IRS.
- On January 26, 2022, 166 bipartisan Members of Congress expressed concern about the backlog in a letter to Secretary Yellen, asking for penalty relief and to halt automated collection notices due to the IRS's inability to do its job.

Republican calls for drastic action have achieved some results. The IRS is...

- Creating "surge teams," reassigning employees from other areas within the IRS to help with the backlog. One team of 1,200 has already been reassigned and the agency is in the process of compiling a second team.
- Providing mandatory overtime pay for IRS employees.
- Suspending the delivery of automated collection notices to taxpayers, which otherwise would result in greater confusion and higher call volume (Notices that are required by law will still be sent, like notices normally issued when a taxpayer owes additional tax or has no record of filing a tax return).
- Developing specific penalty relief options.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Republicans will pressure the IRS daily to ensure it uses every tool available to resolve this backlog as quickly as possible.
- Republicans will ask the IRS Commissioner to provide weekly emergency metrics about progress toward improving its responsiveness to taxpayers and reducing the backlog.
- For this year's tax filing season, the IRS has put out a "Tips for Taxpayers" document that provides advice on how best to proceed to get a refund as quickly as possible.
- Encourage constituents to file tax returns electronically and use direct deposit when possible. That is the best way to get tax returns processed in a timely fashion.
- Recommend constituents experiencing problems reaching the IRS contact your district office to help expedite resolution of issues.