

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner of Internal Revenue
Internal Revenue Service

RE: Request for broader federal tax relief amid the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and Commissioner Rettig:

On behalf of the 28,000 members of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants (TXCPA), we are writing to request the postponement of filing and payment deadlines for all returns and payments not covered in IRS Notice 2020-18, Notice 2020-20, Notice 2020-23 and recent guidance and to address other issues as discussed below. As mentioned in TXCPA's letters to you dated March 23, 2020, and March 26, 2020, we appreciate the postponement of deadlines associated with federal income tax payments, federal income tax returns, the first quarter federal estimated income tax payments, gift tax returns and certain compliance programs in light of the unprecedented circumstances created by COVID-19.

As we work through the issues involved, we urge Treasury and the IRS to consider the following:

- **Quarterly Employer Returns**
The Form 941 first quarter payroll tax returns are due April 30 and have not been extended. The COVID-19 tax relief provided by Congress includes many provisions related to the employer portion for payroll taxes and additional time is needed for guidance and form modifications so accurate returns can be submitted.
- **Third-Party Authorization**
We understand the need to keep IRS personnel safe. However, without a functioning CAF unit, practitioners are not able to process new Powers of Attorney (POAs) to access transcripts online. With the IRS practitioner priority hotline also not functioning, e-Services has been one of the few remaining resources for obtaining information needed to assist new clients. We request that the IRS establish procedures to accept faxed POAs to enable practitioners to access taxpayers' accounts via e-Services, and to be able to represent taxpayers as needed in audit or collection matters.
- **Digital Signatures**
It is also important for the IRS to take whatever measures are possible to allow taxpayers and their return preparers to utilize technology, such as e-signatures for Form 8879, to keep a safe distance from others during the pandemic. We appreciate the IRS' guidance on the acceptance of electronic signatures and electronic mail communications regarding certain matters, but that acceptance needs to be expanded, particularly in this time of need. Specifically, we request that the IRS establish procedures to allow electronic signatures for all tax returns, not just the 1040-series, and for all other forms such as Form 2848 (POA), the Form 433 Series (collection information and installment agreements) and other forms necessary for the taxpayers to communicate with the IRS and resolve outstanding matters.

- **Electronic Filing of All Returns**
Since the IRS is no longer processing paper returns (or significantly reducing its processing of paper returns, depending on the information source), we request that the IRS consider options for electronic filing of Forms 1040X, 709 and late-filed federal tax returns from prior years, for which e-filing is generally not available. As the IRS has done with fax filing for refund claims (to report NOL carrybacks, interest limitation revisions, etc.), we request that a fax filing option be considered for these other categories of forms and returns if expansion of e-filing is not feasible.
- **Renewal of Expired and Expiring ITINs**
ITINs of certain foreign individuals have recently expired automatically or are set to expire. We suspect allocation of IRS resources to renewal is not a priority. In addition, the renewal inherently places individuals at risk by reason of requisite interpersonal contacts in the process. We suggest a significant extension of ITINs and deferral of the renewal requirement.

Thank you for your work to guide the country through these difficult days. If you have any questions, or if we can assist further, please feel free to contact me at 832-333-7431 or ddonnelly@cricpa.com; or TXCPA Staff Liaison Patty Wyatt at 817-656-5100 or pw Wyatt@tscpa.net.

Sincerely,



David P. Donnelly, CPA
Chair, Federal Tax Policy Committee
Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants