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Letter to WV Newspapers

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Jerry Fite

March 21, 1986

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DISTRICT OFFICES

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The Honorable Roscoe L. Egger, Jr.
Commissioner, IRS
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Commissioner Egger:

I am writing to you today on behalf of several thousand taxpayers in Huntington, West Virginia who are experiencing a totally unnecessary problem in obtaining access to your public agency. In the Huntington area telephone directories, the toll-free taxpayer service telephone number is not published. It is my understanding this situation has existed for two years in Huntington. Even if this is an error, which I am hopeful it is, it is indicative of a larger problem.

Unfortunately, because of the Service's cost cutting measures in taxpayer services, other Service offices in a locale are prohibited from being listed in local telephone directories. For example, in Huntington there is a Taxpayer Service office, but it has no telephone accessible to the public. Thus were the toll free number published, the public still would not have complete access to the IRS offices in Huntington.

This is but one example of how the Administration's aim of reducing federal spending has had the effect of denying our citizens reasonable services. It is particularly repugnant that the administration would jeopardize the voluntary tax payment system by denying citizens access to information at a time when every tax dollar may mean the difference between the life or demise of a government service.

As part of IRS new taxpayer service policy, I routinely receive taxpayer assistance kits. I consider assisting the taxpayer with such services an integral part of my congressional duties, but I must point out that while you are charged with this responsibility under the law, I am not. Another result of IRS's taxpayer service policy has been increased inquiries to the West Virginia State Tax Department in Huntington in which the Department is queried about your agency's location. What seems obvious to me is that the cost cutting measures IRS has taken with taxpayer services in the long range cost taxpayers more. Perhaps IRS's budget will shrink, but lost revenues, additional budget costs in other offices having to perform IRS services, or in having to turn to the private sector to pay for tax services, certainly increase the taxpayers bill.

The Honorable Roscoe L. Egger, Jr.

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I ask you to consider these points during the coming weeks of the tax season.

With warm regard, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nick J. Rahall, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and a stylized "R".

NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

NJR/tkk