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April 22, 2015

The Honorable John Koskinen  
Commissioner  
The Internal Revenue Service  
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Koskinen:

Last week, on April 15, millions of Americans completed part of their civic duty and voluntarily filed their income taxes owed to the federal government. While many Americans' claims will be filed properly, income tax fraud is as pervasive as it has ever been with thousands of claims filed subject to refund fraud each year. In fact, last year alone, an estimated \$5.8 billion was wrongly dispersed to identity thieves. And, in my district, I have already heard of dozens of individuals who already believe that they have been the victims of income tax identification theft.

As you are aware, income tax identification theft occurs when a thief files an income tax return using the Taxpayer Identification Number or Social Security number of a legitimate taxpayer and claims a refund based on this stolen information. This kind of fraud impacts the ability of innocent taxpayers to file their taxes and receive their tax refunds on time and in full.

I believe that there are two overarching problems caused by the ubiquitous nature of this kind of identity theft: (1) as stated before, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) paid out approximately \$5.8 billion in fraudulent returns during the 2013 filing year and (2) according to a recently released Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) report, the IRS took an average of 278 days to resolve the taxpayers' fraudulently impacted accounts.

In light of this growing problem, TIGTA released five recommendations in its March 20, 2015 audit. This review was initiated by a prior TIGTA audit, which stated the IRS was not providing quality customer service to identity theft victims. I too share similar concerns with TIGTA and ask the IRS to answer the following questions:

1. What is the IRS doing to implement the five TIGTA recommendations? I am aware that the IRS disagrees with two of TIGTA's recommendations, but nevertheless, I would like to know what the IRS is doing in response to the March 20, 2015 TIGTA audit.

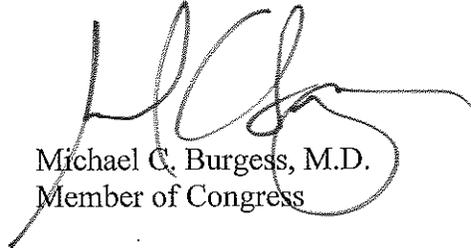
2. The IRS states on its website that “The IRS combats tax-related identity theft with an aggressive strategy of prevention, detection and victim assistance.” Please describe the IRS’ exact policies and procedures to combat such income tax identity theft.

3. The IRS claims that it is a priority to help those who have been victims of income tax fraud. Please describe the IRS’ exact policies and procedures to help such victims.

Maintaining safe and effective income tax filing procedures is squarely within the purview of the IRS. And, while foul play is inevitable by bad actors, having proper filing policies and procedures is of the utmost importance to millions of people. Americans need to feel secure in the belief that when they file, the IRS is taking responsibility to safeguard their sensitive information and combating income tax identification theft.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress