

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 12, 2007

The Honorable Kevin M. Brown  
Acting Commissioner  
Internal Revenue Service  
U.S. Department of Treasury  
1111 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Brown:

We write out of concern for the many employees who process paper tax returns in the Internal Revenue Service facility in Andover, Massachusetts. These hardworking men and women have dedicated years of service to the IRS. They are trained and skilled employees who are vital to our nation's tax system.

We understand, however, that these men and women may lose their jobs under the agency's 1998 reorganization plan, which established a target date of September 2009 for ending paper return processing in Andover and reducing the workforce at that facility. We urge you to reconsider this plan so as to not jeopardize the jobs of these employees.

The 2009 target date was based on a projection that 80 percent of all federal tax returns would be filed electronically by 2007. However, that transition has not occurred as quickly as projected. As the IRS Oversight Board's annual report to Congress for 2006 shows, only 54 percent of tax returns were filed electronically last year. The Oversight Board itself recommends postponing the target date for reducing the number of Andover workers to 2012, and we urge you to adopt this recommendation.

Moreover, even if the anticipated shift to electronic filing materializes, the workers currently processing paper returns at the Andover facility could easily be retrained to perform the debt collection work currently being performed by private contractors. As you acknowledged in testimony before Congress, IRS employees would be more efficient in performing this work than private collection companies, and could perform those duties at a lower cost.

To better understand the situation at Andover, we would appreciate additional information about the plans for this facility. It would be very helpful if you could provide us with:

- (1) The most current information on the annual total number of paper tax returns, and the total number of paper tax returns filed during peak season, processed at the Andover facility;

- (2) Your current estimates for the number of employees who will be affected by the planned elimination of paper processing at Andover; and
- (3) A description of your current timetable for the reorganization as it affects the Andover facility.

In addition, we would appreciate your written response to the following questions:

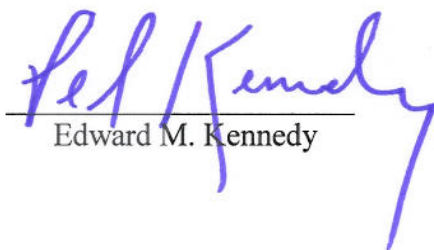
- (1) Both the GAO and the IRS Oversight Board have recognized that taxpayers who are not yet filing their taxes electronically are much more resistant to making that switch. Has this resistance been considered in discussions to delay the target date for reaching 80% electronic returns?
- (2) The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration and the National Taxpayer Advocate recommend additional functions and programs they believe should be performed by IRS employees. Are there any plans to retrain the Andover employees to perform these functions?

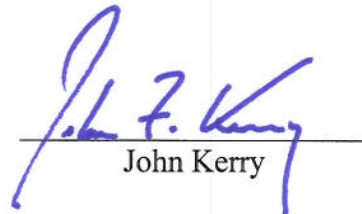
We appreciate the efforts you have made so far to reduce the impact of this reorganization on IRS employees. We urge you to continue to ensure that these federal workers are not left behind during the restructuring of the facility.

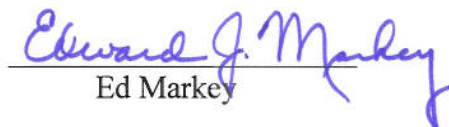
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

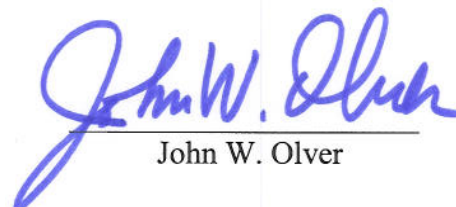
With respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,

  
Edward M. Kennedy

  
John Kerry

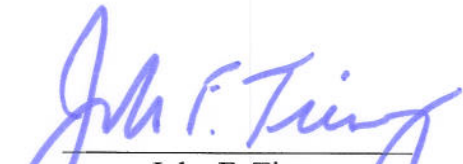
  
Ed Markey

  
John W. Olver



---

Marty Meehan



---

John F. Tierney