

NIKI TSONGAS
5TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2105

2229 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3411
(202) 226-0771 (FAX)

11 KEARNEY SQUARE
3RD FLOOR
LOWELL, MA 01852
(978) 459-0101
(978) 459-1907 (FAX)

305 ESSEX STREET
4TH FLOOR
LAWRENCE, MA 01840
(978) 681-6200
(978) 682-6070 (FAX)

April 14, 2008

The Honorable Douglas Shulman
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
U.S. Department of Treasury
1111 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Shulman,

We write out of concern for the many employees who process paper tax returns and field constituent calls on a daily basis at the Internal Revenue Service facilities in Andover and Fitchburg, Massachusetts. These hardworking men and women have dedicated years of service to the IRS and the local community. They are skilled employees who are vital to our nation's tax system and our region's economy.


Having written to you on this subject in the past, and having met with the employees working at this facility, we understand that many of these men and women may lose their jobs under the agency's reorganization plan. It is our understanding that this plan establishes a target date of September 2009 for ending paper return processing in Andover and dramatically reducing the workforce at that facility. We urge you to reconsider this plan.


The 2009 target date was based on a projection that 80 percent of all federal tax returns would be filed electronically by 2007. This transition, however, 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 in 2006. 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.

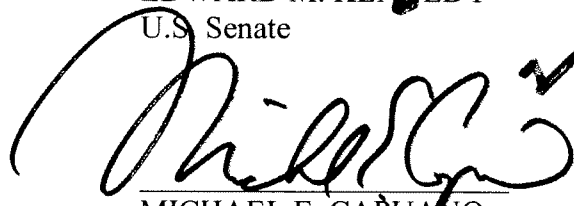
Moreover, even if the anticipated shift to electronic filing materializes, the workers currently processing returns at the Andover facility possess a program familiarity and institutional memory that the IRS cannot replicate elsewhere. Indeed, Andover's employee knowledge-base has been critical to taxpayer's smooth transition to the electronic filing process. The Andover Service Center was an original location of the IRS's e-help program and the value of Andover's expertise will continue to grow as more taxpayers switch to electronic filing. These workers could also easily be trained to perform the debt collection work currently being performed by private contractors. IRS employees would be more efficient in performing this work than private collection companies, and could perform those duties at a lower cost.

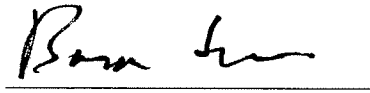
We share the IRS's goal of improving government efficiency for taxpayers. Given the unique skills the Andover employees possess, we believe that it would be counter-productive for the IRS to relocate these services. We appreciate the efforts you have made thus far to reduce the impact of this reorganization on IRS employees and urge you to continue to ensure that these federal workers are not left unemployed as a result of this restructuring.

Sincerely,

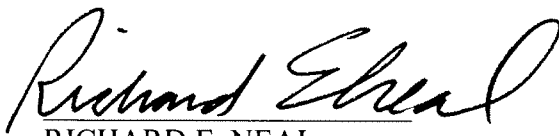

NIKI TSONGAS
Member of Congress

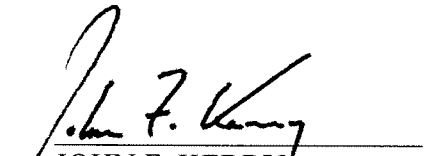

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
U.S. Senate



MICHAEL E. CAPUANO
Member of Congress



BARNEY FRANK
Member of Congress


EDWARD MARKEY
Member of Congress

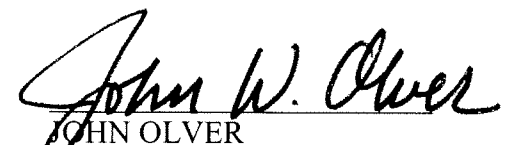

RICHARD E. NEAL
Member of Congress

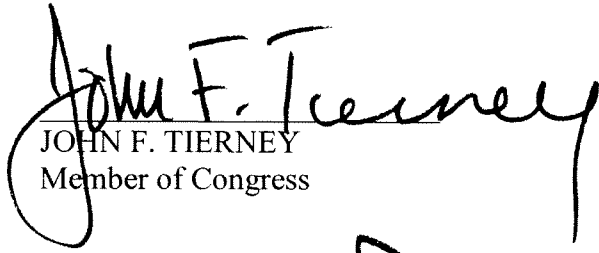

JOHN F. KERRY
U.S. Senate

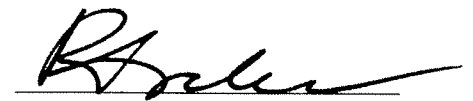

WILLIAM DELAHUNT
Member of Congress


STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress


JAMES MCGOVERN
Member of Congress


JOHN OLVER
Member of Congress


JOHN F. TIERNEY
Member of Congress


PAUL HODES
Member of Congress


CAROL SHEA-PORTER
Member of Congress