

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Erin M. Collins
National Taxpayer Advocate
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room 3031
Washington, DC 200224

Dear Advocate Collins,

I am writing to express my longstanding concerns regarding the quality of assistance that the Richmond Taxpayer Advocate Service (“TAS”) office is providing to Virginians. In light of the current degradation of the IRS workforce, it is imperative that TAS prioritizes improvements in taxpayer service – especially in offices where staffing issues already are causing delays and disruptions to citizens seeking assistance or simply relying on a timely tax refund. I urge you to take immediate steps to enhance the service that Richmond TAS provides my constituents.

The Richmond TAS office has struggled with underperformance for years, predating the current administration. The reasons for the office’s underwhelming service are two-fold.

First, Richmond TAS is not fully staffed. The office should have at least 19 case advocates, but currently has 17. Each advocate handles about 150 cases per year, meaning this staffing shortfall significantly increases individual caseloads and further strains the office’s ability to provide timely, effective service.

Second, I am concerned that TAS leadership has not done enough to foster a positive work environment and to improve morale at Richmond TAS. During challenging times, employees look to their supervisors for encouragement, reassurance, and direction. Regional and national TAS leaders must provide the support that those in offices like Richmond TAS need in order to operate effectively.

With the knowledge of Richmond TAS’s personnel issues and leadership challenges in mind, I ask you to answer the following questions by March 25:

1. How long has Richmond TAS been performing in the bottom 50 percent of TAS offices nationwide?
2. What metrics does TAS use to track performance of its local offices? What specific factors have contributed to Richmond TAS’s poor performance?
3. What steps, if any, did TAS headquarters take to improve performance at Richmond TAS prior to January 2025?
4. What support does TAS headquarters plan to offer Richmond TAS’s leadership to improve performance?
5. How does TAS headquarters plan to address staffing shortages at Richmond TAS to ensure that Virginians receive the level of taxpayer service that they deserve?

While pre-existing personnel and leadership issues at Richmond TAS have left morale among its staff low, the workplace atmosphere there likely will deteriorate further in the coming months as Trump Administration policies cause more staff to leave. Already quite strained with just 17 case advocates, another two advocates and a senior case advocate have accepted the Musk-Trump buyout, which will take effect on May 15. At that point, only 15 case advocates will remain to serve all of Virginia—a nearly 25 percent reduction in staff.

Further, according to recent news reports, President Trump plans to cut IRS staffing by a total of 50 percent. If these cuts are applied across the board, Richmond TAS will be left with a skeleton crew of case advocates, further jeopardizing essential taxpayer services. I strongly oppose any staffing reductions that undermine TAS's ability to serve Virginians, and I urge you to push back against harmful personnel decisions that will negatively impact taxpayers.

Thank you for the work that you do to advocate for Virginia's taxpayers. I look forward to your response and to working together to improve the service that TAS provides to my constituents.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator