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COMMITTEE ON
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August 12, 2016

The Honorable John Koskinen
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
US Department of the Treasury
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 3241
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Commissioner Koskinen,

As you know, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offices around the country are intended to serve taxpayers, answer questions, and help address tax related issues that may arise. Unfortunately, the IRS office in Gainesville, Georgia, is not meeting even the most modest expectations of assistance that people have for the IRS.

The Gainesville office, located in the 9th Congressional District in Northeast Georgia, is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm five days a week. The office closes for one hour every day for lunch. During the seven hours when the office is actually open, there is only one person there to serve taxpayers.

After hearing numerous reports from constituents that the Gainesville IRS office was frequently helping as few as three to six people a day, I decided to go see what the problem was myself.

I arrived at the office at 8:15 am and was shocked by what I heard. One woman I talked to said that she had gotten to the IRS office at 4:00 am in order to get in line and be seen, others arrived at 8:30 and were turned away because there was no hope to be seen that day. People—including senior citizens—who were there waiting once the office opened were forced to wait outside in the Georgia summer heat in the hopes of receiving assistance.

During my visit to the office, I was told of frequent system outages, long lines, inadequate customer assistance, and poor service. It is inconceivable to me that in light of the multitude of problems I witnessed, the IRS continues to only employ one person for seven hours a day, particularly given that the one employee appears unable to handle the volume or even a reasonable number of taxpayer requests in their time at the office.

My office made calls to the Washington, D.C. IRS office to get answers, and were told that once an appointment system was implemented in October, the problems would essentially take care of themselves. It is true that people will no longer need to arrive at 4:00am to be seen that day, however I fail to see how that addresses the larger problem in either the short or long term.

Appointments may cut down on lines, but they will not address the fact that the IRS office in Gainesville is not meeting demand and serving an inordinately small number of customers each day. This is the only IRS office in my entire district after the Athens office was closed. That means that you are expecting one IRS employee to serve over 700,000 people. Scheduled appointments will not make up for poor customer service or system failures.

I would like to know how you plan to rectify this situation for the hardworking taxpayers of Gainesville, GA and citizens of the surrounding area who utilize the Gainesville IRS office.

Please explain, in detail, what steps will be taken to address the inadequacies present at the office and ensure a better and more efficient customer experience for those seeking assistance.

I look forward to receiving your response by August 19, 2016. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Collins

Ninth Congressional District of Georgia