

**COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515**

September 30, 2020

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner Rettig,

I write to you today for the first time as Chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight to request your appearance before our panel in order to address the urgent need for oversight of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) following the blockbuster news on Donald Trump's finances and tax returns. Left unaddressed by your agency, the revelations of Mr. Trump's abuse and malfeasance threaten public confidence in the IRS and the very legitimacy of our Federal tax system.

The New York Times found that Donald Trump paid \$750 in income taxes in 2016 and 2017, and zero income tax in 10 of the previous 15 tax years.ⁱ The takeaway for most Americans, especially those struggling to survive during this pandemic, is that our Federal tax system is stacked against the average American and being gamed by bad actors like Mr. Trump.

Past Presidents have set better examples. For instance, in 1976, President Jimmy Carter determined he owed no taxes and made a voluntary payment of \$6,000 due to concern about public perception. President Carter understood his responsibility both to the Treasury and the American people in the exact way his successor, Donald Trump, does not. It is the oversight responsibility of Congress to ensure agencies like the IRS are holding public officials accountable.

As Commissioner of the IRS, you must ensure that our tax system is unshakably supported by rigorous enforcement and that all taxpayers, including public officials, comply with the tax laws. You must foster trust and confidence in our tax system and tax administration. However, I fear the reported information undermines Americans' confidence in our tax system.

To attempt to restore this trust, you must first start by fulfilling the Committee's legally binding request for Donald Trump's business and personal tax returns, which the Treasury Department has been illegally withholding from the Ways and Means Committee for the last 540 days. Second, I request that you appear before the Subcommittee on Oversight in early October. The focus of the Subcommittee's hearing

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will be general oversight of IRS operations with a particular focus on issues of tax compliance, including those raised by the reports of Donald Trump's tax returns, the distribution of Economic Impact Payments, backlogs and the impact of COVID-19.

I appreciate your immediate attention to this serious matter and look forward to the agency complying with the request from Chairman Richard Neal for Donald Trump's tax returns as well as to your appearance before the Subcommittee in short order.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Bill Pascrell, Jr., *Chairman*
Subcommittee on Oversight
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives

ⁱ Russ Buettner, Susanne Craig, and Mike McIntire, "Long-Concealed Records Show Trump's Chronic Losses and Years of Tax Avoidance," N.Y. Times (Sept. 27, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/27/us/donald-trump-taxes.html>.