

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Wilkie:

Thank you for your work and efforts as our nation navigates through a public health emergency due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We write to you regarding the financial well-being of our country's heroes, their caregivers, and survivors, and ask that the recovery rebate checks being issued by the Treasury Department reach our nation's veterans in as timely a manner as possible.

As you know, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136) provides a recovery rebate check subject to certain eligibility and income requirements. The primary means by which the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will get recovery rebate checks to Americans is via information obtained through 2018 or 2019 tax returns, which may create additional barriers for Americans who do not typically file tax returns.

Many of our veterans, particularly those with serious, service-connected disabilities, earn little to no income outside of the benefits they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As such, many are not required to and do not file an annual federal tax return. Recently, Treasury used its authority to provide recovery rebate payments to Social Security and Railroad Retirement beneficiaries, without the need to file a tax return. We believe that veterans receiving benefits through the VA should and must be treated the same way, and encourage the IRS to continue working toward reducing barriers for non-filers claiming recovery rebates.

We believe that VA has a number of benefit programs that could be used to identify eligible veterans, including disability compensation and pension payments. These programs would also have veterans' direct deposit information available so that recovery rebate checks could be sent to veterans as promptly as possible.


We can all agree that our veterans have earned more than we can ever repay for their dedicated service. That is why we request that your Departments work together to identify and provide recovery rebate checks to eligible veterans, without the need to file a federal tax return. Your Departments should also alert Congress of any barriers preventing any action from being taken. If left unchanged, this may impose a burden on our heroes, and many veterans may never receive the financial support they need and have earned.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you as our nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



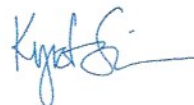
Doug Jones
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator