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March 31, 2020

Mr. Tim Hugo
Executive Director
Free File, Inc.
14098A Lee Highway
Centreville, VA 20120

Dear Mr. Hugo,

I write today to urge the Free File Alliance to provide simplified tax forms and filing assistance necessary to receive the 2020 recovery rebates authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) to Americans through the Free File program. The recovery rebates are expected to provide much-needed assistance to millions of Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, the CARES Act authorizes the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to distribute recovery rebates to qualifying Americans. For the vast majority of Americans who file federal tax returns each year, the IRS will use information it already has on file to determine their eligibility and rebate amount. However, for millions of Americans who do not file federal tax returns, the IRS is currently saying it must collect the required information before they can be issued a rebate.

Yesterday, the IRS alerted taxpayers who typically do not file a return that they will need to file a "simple tax return" to receive the rebate. I am concerned that the preparation of this form and the filing process will be confusing for non-filers, many of whom are unaccustomed to preparing yearly tax filings and have vision or cognitive challenges. My concerns are heightened by the fact that non-filers represent some of the most financially vulnerable Americans. Non-filers include seniors and disabled individuals receiving Social Security benefits; seniors, seriously ill, or severely disabled individuals who rely on Supplemental Security Income or veterans' benefits to make ends meet; and other families with incomes below the filing thresholds.

I believe that free tax preparation assistance can go a long way in easing the burden on non-filers who may need to file a return and helping our country during this pandemic. Accordingly, I urge the Free File Alliance to work with the IRS to provide a simplified tax form and filing assistance through the Free File program to non-filers who are entitled to receive a recovery rebate.

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to helping American taxpayers in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Neal", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard E. Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways & Means
United States House of Representatives