

Legislative Recommendation #21**Require the IRS to Mail Notices at Least Quarterly to Taxpayers With Delinquent Tax Liabilities****SUMMARY**

- *Problem:* The IRS is required to send billing notices to taxpayers with tax debts once a year. Private businesses typically send billing notices more frequently, often monthly. By sending infrequent billing notices, the IRS receives fewer payments from taxpayers, and as a result, more taxpayers face aggressive IRS collection actions such as levies and liens.
- *Solution:* Require the IRS to send billing notices to taxpayers with tax debts at least quarterly.

PRESENT LAW

IRC § 7524 requires the IRS to send taxpayers with delinquent accounts a written notice that sets forth the amount of the tax delinquency as of the date of the notice and to do so “[n]ot less often than annually.”

REASONS FOR CHANGE

The IRS satisfies the IRC § 7524 requirement by sending taxpayers with delinquent accounts Notice CP-71, Reminder Notice, once a year. However, the infrequency of IRS billing notices leaves collectible revenue uncollected and subjects taxpayers who would make payments if they received more frequent reminders to additional penalties and interest charges, along with harsher consequences such as wage garnishments, bank account levies, and property liens.

Sending more frequent notices after the IRS’s initial notice stream would entail additional postage and processing costs. However, private sector businesses, including credit card issuers and retailers, face this same trade-off, and they almost uniformly send billing notices more frequently than once a year. Most send delinquency notices on at least a monthly basis. They evidently have found that frequent notices generate more revenue, net of costs. Many individual and business taxpayers face financial challenges and prioritize paying the bills of creditors who are sending regular notices and are top of mind.

RECOMMENDATION

- Amend IRC § 7524 to require the IRS to notify taxpayers of delinquent tax liabilities at least quarterly.¹

¹ For legislative language generally consistent with this recommendation, see Protecting Taxpayers Act, S. 3278, 115th Cong. § 201 (2018). As more taxpayers establish online accounts, the IRS will be able to transmit notices to taxpayers electronically rather than by snail mail. For that reason, we are phrasing our recommendation broadly to allow that means of communication as an option.