



September 18, 2021

Commissioner Charles Rettig
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C., 20224

Dear Commissioner Rettig,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to work with NTEU during the pandemic. I know we continue to share the goal of taking all measures possible to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to ensure that IRS employees remain safe and secure while performing the important work of the IRS.

Employees continue to raise concerns about their health and safety while performing their jobs. The issuance of Executive Order 14043 has resurfaced some of these concerns in the context of employees' interactions with the public. The executive order states, in relevant part, that "the health and safety of the Federal workforce, and the health and safety of members of the public with whom they interact, are foundational to the efficiency of the civil service" and in order "to promote the health and safety of the Federal workforce," it is necessary to require COVID-19 vaccinations for all federal employees.

Despite the agency's efforts over the past 18 months, certain employees remain at enhanced risk, particularly with increased transmission of the delta variant. Employees without portable work report to IRS workplaces daily, including employees who work in the agency's Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC). Since May 24, 2021, TAC employees have been meeting with taxpayers face-to-face without regard to the taxpayers' vaccine status, and these employees must clean their own work area between appointments. The IRS is also in the process of considering its return-to-workplace plan, which will likely include the return of field-going employees from the compliance functions, further exposing them to an unvaccinated public. These are just a few examples where IRS employees are at greater risk of exposure and illness from COVID-19.

NTEU believes that the best way to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, and thus protect IRS employees from the increased risks they are facing, is to require that all who enter an IRS facility – including every taxpayer, contractor and visitor – is fully vaccinated in order to receive in-person service. The measure is necessary to adequately protect these public-facing IRS employees from COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. It also is consistent with the spirit of Executive Order 14043 and the President's stated goal that all Americans should be vaccinated.

Other measures, such as redirecting unvaccinated taxpayers to virtual services to the maximum extent practicable, and setting and enforcing limits on the number of persons who may be in a TAC at any given time, are necessary steps but not adequate without more. That is why NTEU strongly requests that the IRS take all necessary measures to ensure that all who enter its facilities are fully vaccinated.

Thank you for your efforts and for continuing to work with us as this health and safety crisis continues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President