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National Society of Accountants Calls for IRS Improvements

Washington, DC, April 3, 2017 – The National Society of Accountants (NSA) and other tax practitioner-related associations have formed a coalition to call for massive improvements in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

The coalition issued a report, [*Ensuring a Modern-Functioning IRS for the 21st Century*](#), that outlines the framework for these improvements and a range of recommendations.

NSA Executive Vice President John Ams, who serves on the IRS Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee (ETAAC) and chairs one of the ETAAC subgroups, explained, “We have spent years calling for these improvements and better funding for the IRS to serve the needs of American taxpayers, yet funding continues to be cut and IRS service levels are abysmal. In 2016 the IRS only answered 53 percent of calls from taxpayers. That’s not good enough.”

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Congress at his confirmation hearing that he supported increased funding for the IRS, but the Administration now proposes an additional \$239 million funding decrease on top of nearly a billion-dollar cut in 2017.

Mnuchin said at his hearing, “I can assure you that the president-elect understands the concept of when we add people, we make money. He’ll get that completely. That’s a very quick conversation with Donald Trump.”

“It’s time for Secretary Mnuchin to have that conversation with President Trump,” Ams declared. “Investments made in technology and customer service at the IRS will generate

tax revenue increases that will be exponentially higher than whatever the spending increase is. If we are serious about closing the annual \$400+ billion tax gap of unpaid taxes, we should give the IRS the tools necessary to collect those taxes.”

Among the many recommendations in the coalition report is a call for the IRS to create a new dedicated executive-level tax practitioner services unit that would consolidate IRS functions that affect tax practitioners and provide them with easier access to taxpayer client accounts in the IRS system.

NSA believes so strongly in the need for improved services for tax practitioners that it issued a [Tax Practitioners Bill of Rights](#) in 2016 which included 11 specific recommendations based on three principles:

1. The right to have tax laws and rules passed in a timely manner.
2. The right to quality service from the IRS.
3. The right to practice without undue IRS demands during tax filing season.

These and other issues facing the IRS are not new, and the coalition report is based largely on the [Report of the National Commission on Restructuring the IRS](#) that was issued nearly 20 years ago.

“It is a sad state of affairs when 20 years go by and the IRS still faces the same fundamental problems,” Ams said. “It’s time for change.”

In a report delivered to Congress in 2015, National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson wrote, “Taxpayers are receiving the worst levels of taxpayer service since at least 2001, when the IRS implemented its current performance measures. In fact, the levels of service are the lowest I have witnessed in my 40 years of working in the field of taxation.”

For more information about NSA, visit www.nsacct.org.

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