



INSTITUTE for the American Worker

Customer Service Improvement Act

Bill name: IRS Customer Service Improvement Act

Bill sponsors: [S. 2132](#), Sponsored by Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN)

Summary: In 2020, over 75 percent of calls to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) went unanswered. Average time on hold to actually speak with an IRS representative was 18 minutes. Taxpayers receiving face-to-face assistance from the IRS dropped to 1 million, declining from 2.3 million the year before, and 4.4 million in FY2016. A [report](#) from the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Services that reported those troubling figures says insufficient staffing is a factor for taxpayers facing “significant difficulty reaching IRS representatives.”

At the same time, hundreds of IRS employees have performed representational work for a labor union while on the clock for their official job. This is called “official time” or “union time” – when a taxpayer-funded government employee performs union work rather than their assigned task. In FY2019, the most recent year for which the [data](#) is available, over 550 IRS employees were paid taxpayers’ dollars to perform union work. Forty-six IRS Customer Service Representatives and 12 Internal Revenue Agents even used “official time” for 80 percent or more of their time at work.

To refocus IRS employees on performing their jobs to serve the taxpayer rather than performing union work during the busy tax filing season, Sen. Mike Braun and Rep. Tom Rice introduced the IRS Customer Service Improvement Act. Their bill would amend federal law to prohibit taxpayer-funded union time for IRS employees from February 12 through April 15, annually.

Sen. Braun said, “The pressing needs of American taxpayers should be the top priority for IRS staff, at the very least during tax filing season. While President Biden has requested \$80 billion to muster an army of bureaucrats at the IRS, currently many IRS employees are spending their work time completing unrelated representational work on the taxpayer’s dime. This bill will focus all available staff to complete the duties of the positions for which they were hired, rather than union work, during tax season.”

President Biden recently proposed a plan to hire more IRS employees but has not addressed the issue of existing IRS employees performing taxpayer-paid union work rather than serving the taxpayer.

Bill Status: The IRS Customer Service Improvement Act was introduced in the Senate on June 17, 2021.
