

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 17, 2024

The Honorable Daniel I. Wefel
Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Commissioner Werfel:

We write to express our concerns regarding the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) recent announcement that it will be closing the Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC) in Bangor, Maine, for the foreseeable future. Given the significant adverse impacts this decision will have on our constituents, particularly those who reside in our state's most rural counties in northern and eastern Maine, we urge you to reconsider closing the Bangor TAC and consider all potential alternatives short of closure. Closing the Bangor TAC would exacerbate the service problems rural Mainers are already experiencing, especially as the Presque Isle TAC remains closed.

Some of Maine's most disadvantaged counties currently rely on the Bangor TAC as their primary service center, and eliminating this staffed office would create significant hardship for hard-working rural Mainers. Many of these communities have limited Internet and broadband access, making in-person TAC services essential. Residents of Maine's most rural county - Piscataquis County - regularly use Bangor as their major service center, and the easternmost county in the United States - Washington County - would see their already lengthy commute to a TAC nearly double. The same is true for Aroostook County, the second largest county east of the Mississippi River by total area, where some Mainers travel over 200 miles to receive assistance from the Bangor TAC.

With the tax filing season opening in January, many Americans will have questions regarding their taxes. While we understand the workforce challenges currently facing the IRS, it is unrealistic and unacceptable to require our constituents to travel upwards of 550 miles to speak with an IRS tax professional dedicated to resolving their tax issues. Additionally, the Augusta TAC is only open between 8:30 AM–4:30 PM on weekdays, forcing Mainers to take significant time out of their workdays to receive tax assistance from the only remaining TAC in the area.

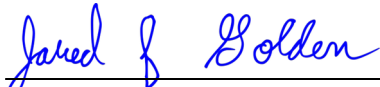
For these reasons, we urge you to reconsider the closure of the TAC in Bangor. Additionally, our offices would appreciate the opportunity to work with you to find a long-term solution that would reopen a staffed TAC in Aroostook County. To get a better understanding of exactly how this closing will affect our constituents, please provide us answers to the following questions by January 15, 2025:

1. How does the IRS plan to provide sufficient services to rural Mainers with limited or no broadband access?
2. Is the IRS able to reallocate staff from other offices to assist affected Mainers during the upcoming tax filing season? If not, will these residents be eligible for an extension to file their taxes?
3. What remote services are available to rural residents? Additionally, does the IRS measure the quality of remote services compared to in-person services at TACs?
4. How many Mainers have utilized services at the following TACs since 2008: Presque Isle, Bangor, Lewiston, Augusta, and South Portland?
5. Has the IRS considered temporarily reducing the days of service for the Bangor office instead of closing the office temporarily?

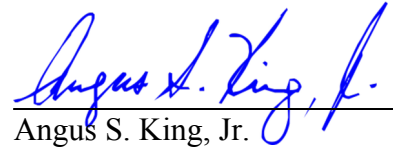
6. If the IRS decides to move forward with this temporary closure, what specific steps will be taken to address the workforce challenges and ensure that the Bangor office reopens following the end of the temporary closure on December 15, 2025?
7. What plans, if any, does the IRS have to reopen the Presque Isle location for in-person services?

We strongly urge you to reconsider your decision and reject the closure of the Bangor TAC. Thank you for considering our request, and we appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator