

## IRS Oversight Board

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### **IRS OVERSIGHT BOARD VOICES CONCERN OVER SERVICE CUTS**

(Washington, DC) At its June 1-2 meeting in Washington, DC, the IRS Oversight Board voiced concern regarding the IRS plan to close 68 Taxpayer Assistance Centers.

“The Board does not quarrel with the IRS’ methodology used to determine which Taxpayer Assistance Centers it will close. Rather, the Board raised concerns about options that would lower the IRS’ own aspirations to provide meaningful services to *all* taxpayers who must deal with an extremely complex tax system,” said Board Chairman Raymond T. Wagner, Jr. “For the past few years, we’ve seen dramatic, positive changes in the services the IRS provides taxpayers. We must ensure those gains are not lost. Obtaining service via the Internet is ideal for many taxpayers, but others may need personal assistance at an IRS walk-in center or over the toll-free telephone lines. The IRS must understand those taxpayers’ needs and make decisions that will support their efforts to comply voluntarily with the law.”

In its March 2005 IRS budget report, the Board noted its concern over “shifting resources away from customer service ... and imposing a one-size-fits-all approach to customer service,” including closing Taxpayer Assistance Centers. The Board’s recommended budget does not close any walk-in sites.

#### ***Board Reviews IRS FY2007 Budget and Computer Program Status***

The IRS Oversight Board reviewed the IRS’ preliminary steps in developing its FY2007 budget. It also discussed the status of the IRS’ Business Systems Modernization and Information Technology programs. The BSM program continues to meet its deliverables and schedule. IRS Chief Information Officer Todd Grams also briefed the Board on the status of the IRS Information Technology Infrastructure, which faces future challenges as its equipment continues to age and new demands, such as security requirements, continue to grow.

#### ***Board Meets with NTEU President and IRS Management***

The Board met with National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) President Colleen Kelley and IRS management to discuss the state of labor relations at the IRS. The Board expressed concern at friction between the union and the IRS. Chairman Wagner said that he would like to follow up with both the NTEU leadership and IRS management in September to review what steps have been taken to resolve these issues. The Board also plans to discuss the results of this year’s IRS employee satisfaction survey at its July meeting.

#### ***Next Meeting to be Held in Atlanta***

The IRS Oversight Board will next meet on July 26-27, 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia. There the Board will meet with IRS employees and stakeholders and participate in an IRS National Tax Forum, where tax practitioners learn about changes in tax law, procedures, and other IRS changes relating to their practice.

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