

Topic: Tax filing deadline

Congress is working to lighten tax burden

Today is the deadline to file our taxes. As you look over your family's tax forms, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight work in the U.S. Congress to lighten your tax burden and to let you know that my congressional office is available to help you resolve problems with the Internal Revenue Service.

Although the average person will spend 26 hours filling out the basic 1040 form, there is good news at the end of the task. Because of tax relief laws passed in Congress, your tax liability will be reduced.

It is a fundamental principle of mine that the money spent in Washington is your money, not the federal government's.

As a result of tax relief bills I helped pass since first coming to Congress in 2003, more Coloradans are reaping the benefits of their hard work, especially middle-income families. For example, a family of four earning \$40,000 a year will save an average of \$2,010 in taxes, according to the U.S. Treasury.

Low-income families will benefit as well, especially from an extension of the per-child credit that is refundable for more families. In addition, more than 5 million individuals will see their income tax completely eliminated, meaning nearly 43.4 million low-income American workers now have no tax liability. In Colorado, an estimated 1,564,000 low-income taxpayers are in the lowest tax bracket,



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elimination of the marriage-penalty tax, which previously increased their tax burden for simply saying "I do."

Additional time is required to fill out the 1040 tax form because duplicative tax tables must be completed. One determines your regular tax liability; the second table determines if you owe an alternative minimum tax, or AMT. It is this second table that could increase the amount you owe by grouping middle-income families with the wealthiest Americans.

Unfortunately, an estimated 14 million taxpayers nationwide will be required to pay taxes as if they were wealthy. This occurs because the AMT has never been adjusted for inflation. The AMT was originally designed to ensure that the wealthy would pay taxes and prevent them from abusing tax loopholes. The bottom line is this: Average families don't own yachts and they should not be taxed as if

they did.

et, 10 percent. This is a cut from the previous 15 percent tax rate.

Other tax relief measures provide added benefits. For instance, 421,000 tax-paying families in Colorado qualify for the \$1,000 per-child tax credit, and 551,000 married individuals will benefit from

they did.

Although temporary AMT relief had been passed by the Republican-led Congress in recent years, the latest relief expired at the end of 2005.

To help prevent middle-income families from bearing an added tax burden, I co-sponsored and voted for the Stealth Tax Relief Act last December. This bill extended AMT exemption through 2006, but the bill is still awaiting consideration by the Senate.

I also sent a letter to House and Senate members who are working on finalizing the Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act before it is signed into law by President Bush. When this bill was voted upon in the Senate, an extension of the AMT exemption was included. My letter asks them to include the Senate version in the bill sent to the White House.

In addition to working in Washington to lower your taxes, I am working to resolve any problems you have with the IRS. If you feel you are not receiving fair or timely treatment, please feel free to contact my congressional office nearest you. I have five offices located around Northern and eastern Colorado, and my staff is dedicated to helping constituents cut through bureaucratic red tape at federal agencies such as the IRS.

Marilyn Musgrave (www.house.gov/Musgrave) represents Colorado's 4th Congressional District.