



NICOLE R. GALLOWAY, CPA
Missouri State Auditor

July 11, 2019

Governor Michael L. Parson
Office of the Governor
201 W. Capitol Avenue, Room 216
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Governor Parson:

I want to express my concern on behalf of thousands of Missouri taxpayers who are still awaiting their 2019 tax refunds. The Department of Revenue recently reported to the media that more than 70,000 Missourians are waiting on their refunds. To date, my office has heard from some of these individuals — often seniors, disabled and lower-income citizens — who are desperately awaiting the money they are owed by the state.

There has been poor communication from the Department of Revenue to these taxpayers for the reason for delays, with various explanations given such as a new computer system and even "growing pains." None of the explanations are satisfactory. Taxes are processed at the same time every year. There is no excuse for taxpayers to be experiencing this level of dysfunction.

My office has heard from Missourians who are waiting on their refunds to pay bills and for necessities. Those bills can't get paid with canned responses and generic excuses.

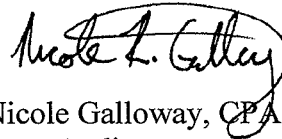
Time and again, the Department of Revenue has demonstrated it has been unable or unwilling to be transparent with citizens and those who demand explanations. To get taxpayers the answers they deserve, my office has conducted audits on the timeliness of tax refunds to Missourians. The audit I released in January 2018 showed that state income tax refunds to individual taxpayers had become increasingly and deliberately delayed, sometimes at the direction of the administration in order to pay other bills first. I was encouraged that the attention we brought to the situation resulted in an improvement in the timeliness of refunds in the audit we conducted a year later.

Now it appears that the timeliness of refunds is again getting worse. In the past few months, my office has passed along to the Department of Revenue the names of more than 1,000 Missourians who have contacted us asking for help with their delayed refunds. The Department of Revenue has not provided adequate answers to these taxpayers. We have sent multiple letters to the acting Director of Revenue on this situation. You have been copied on those letters.

My office will continue to work on behalf of citizens to process these calls and get answers for taxpayers. As you oversee the Department of Revenue, I'm asking for immediate action to address the backlog of delayed refunds.

Within two weeks, please send my office a plan of action on how the state will go about providing refunds to the tens of thousands of Missourians who are still waiting. Additionally, I would like an update on the status of the tax refunds of the more than 1,000 Missourians who personally contacted my office and whose information was forwarded to the Department of Revenue to ensure that they get the money they are rightfully owed. I'm asking that you take immediate action to ensure Missouri taxpayers are receiving the full amount owed to them in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nicole L. Galloway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "N" and "G".

Nicole Galloway, CPA
State Auditor