

# Delays in Tax Return Processing Expected as IRS Is Still Understaffed and Overwhelmed

by VANCE CARIAGA | GO BankingRates



**(GO BankingRates)** - The 2022 tax filing season is scheduled to begin on Jan. 24, and tax return delays are set to begin about a day later. Okay, that's probably an overstatement. But less than two weeks ahead of tax season, the IRS is urging taxpayers to take certain steps to avoid the kinds of massive delays and backlogs that plagued the agency in 2021.

Those delays were due to a confluence of events that caught the IRS short-handed and overwhelmed. One was the COVID-19 pandemic, which infected some of the agency's staff and forced certain offices to close. Another was the mass issuance and processing of COVID-related benefits such as stimulus checks and advance child tax credit payments, which sucked up a lot of time the IRS would normally devote to processing tax returns.

In a statement issued on Monday, the IRS warned that taxpayers might face similar delays this year.

"The pandemic continues to create challenges, but the IRS reminds people there are important steps they can take to help ensure their tax return and refund don't face processing delays," IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig said. "Filing electronically with direct deposit and avoiding a paper tax return is more important than ever this year. And we urge extra attention to those who received an Economic Impact Payment or an advance Child Tax Credit last year. People should make sure they report the cor-

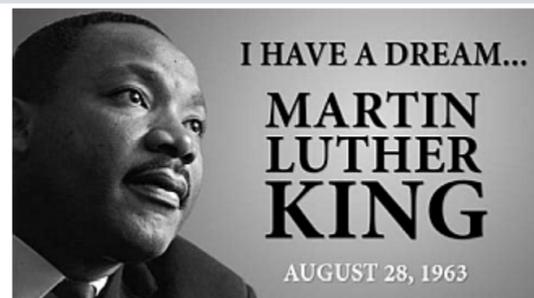
rect amount on their tax return to avoid delays."

He added that in many areas, the IRS is "unable to deliver the amount of service and enforcement that our taxpayers and tax system deserves and needs. This is frustrating for taxpayers, for IRS employees and for me."

Rettig is right about the frustration part. Phone lines have been so overwhelmed that the IRS was only able to answer about 10% of calls last filing season, Bloomberg reported. And as of mid-November 2021, the agency still had a backlog of about 8.6 million returns to process. Normally, the IRS would start a new filing season with a backlog of less than 1 million returns.

"Our phone volumes continue to remain at record-setting levels," Rettig said. "We urge people to check IRS.gov and establish an online account to help them access information more quickly. We have invested in developing new online capacities to make this a quick and easy way for taxpayers to get the information they need."

The IRS also recommends that taxpayers organize and gather 2021 tax records ahead of time to ensure accurate returns and make the process move more smoothly. These records include Social Security numbers, individual taxpayer identification numbers, adoption taxpayer identification numbers, and this year's identity protection personal identification numbers valid for calendar year 2022.



Continued from page 3

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for whites only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today my friends — so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

Continued on page 6

## Biden calls for change to Senate filibuster to pass voting rights bills

by CHRISTOPHER WILSON | yahoo/news

**(Y/news)** - President Biden formally endorsed a change to Senate rules that would ease the passage of new voting rights legislation, but work remains to convince every Democratic senator to support the plan.

"The next few days, when these bills come to a vote, will mark a turning point in this nation," Biden said, speaking in Georgia on Tuesday, referring to a pair of proposals expected to reach the Senate floor in the next week.

"Will we choose democracy over autocracy, light over shadow, justice over injustice? I know where I stand. I will not yield. I will not flinch. I will defend your right to vote and our democracy against all enemies foreign and, yes, domestic. The question is where will the institution of the United States Senate stand?"

Visiting Atlanta with Vice President Kamala Harris, Biden stressed many of the same points about democracy being under attack that he made last week in a speech marking the anniversary of the Jan. 6 Capitol siege.

"Sadly, the United States Senate, designed to be the world's greatest deliberative body, has been rendered a shell of its former self," he said.

"It gives me no satisfaction in saying that, as an institutionalist, as a man who was honored to serve in the Senate, but as an institutionalist I believe the threat to our democracy is so grave that we must find a way to pass these voting rights bills. Debate them, vote, let the majority prevail and if that bare minimum is blocked, we have no option but to change the Senate rules including getting rid of the filibuster for this."

"Anti-voter laws are not new in our nation, but we must not be deceived into thinking they are normal," Harris said, speaking before Biden, adding, "The proponents of these laws are not only putting in place obstacles to the ballot box, they are also working to interfere in our elections to get the outcomes they want and discredit those that they don't. That is not how a democracy should work."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has set Jan. 17 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day — as his deadline for votes on legislation tied to voting rights. The first, the Freedom to Vote Act, would limit state efforts to restrict voting, combat gerrymandering and protect election officials. The second, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, would restore antidiscrimination elements stripped from the Voting Rights Act via a 2013 Supreme Court ruling.

Both bills, however, are seen as unlikely to pass unless changes are made to the filibuster, which is a legislative procedure that prevents most major pieces of legislation from passage without a 60-vote supermajority. Democrats and Republicans each control 50 seats in the chamber, meaning that both bills are all but dead on arrival unless the Senate agrees to a "carve-out" for voting rights legislation — which Biden endorsed Tuesday.

# 'The Measure of a Man'



**(NNPA)** - Legendary actor Sidney Poitier, who broke barriers and stood for justice and Black lives during the most tumultuous times of the civil rights movement, has died.

Poitier, whose iconic 71-year career, included starring roles in "A Raisin in the Sun," "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and "Uptown Saturday Night," was 94. His cause of death has yet to be confirmed.

In an exclusive phone call with the Black Press of America, Bill Cosby said he will miss his long-time friend and co-star.

"He was honored by AFI. And, along with many stars of the stage, screen, politics and higher education who came out to speak, I brought with me the paperback of his autobiography and I said of all groundbreaking movies that Sidney starred in this book is the real story of this man and his journey," Cosby remarked. "I am honored to have

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent  
@StacyBrownMedia

been close enough to him and work and work on serious matters.

According to PBS, Poitier moved to New York City at age 16 after living in the Bahamas for several years with his family. In the Big Apple, he found work as a janitor at the American Negro Theater in exchange for acting lessons. From there, he took up acting roles in plays for the next several years until his film debut in the racially charged, "No Way Out."

Race and social justice would become central themes in much of his work throughout the '50s and '60s.

A Broadway play focused on the life of the Bahamas born star, who earned his first Academy Award nomination in 1959 for his work in "The Defiant Ones," is in the works.

As noted in the New York Post, the nomination was significant to America as he was the first African American to be nominated for Best Actor. That role also earned him a Golden Globe win and a BAFTA Award.

Poitier broke even more barriers in 1963 with his hit film "Lilies of

the Field." The following year, Poitier became the first African American to ever win the Best Actor at the Academy Awards.

His career continued to climb for several more years. In 1967 he starred in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," an interracial romance comedy that ruffled feathers in America. Then came other memorable films, "They Call Me Mister Tibbs," the sequel to the controversial blockbuster "In the Heat of the Night," and "Uptown Saturday Night" opposite Cosby.

He released several more works; "The Measure of a Man: A Spiritual Autobiography (2007)" "Life Beyond Measure: Letters to My Great-Granddaughter (2008)."

"As I entered this world, I would leave behind the nurturing of my family and my home, but in another sense, I would take their protection with me," he said in "Measure of a Man." "The lessons I had learned, the feelings of groundedness and belonging that have been woven into my character there, would be my companions on the journey."

