

JAY INSLEE
1ST DISTRICT, WASHINGTON



COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4701

SHORELINE CENTER
18560 1st Avenue, NE, Suite E-800
Shoreline, WA 98155-2150
(206) 361-0233
Fax: (206) 361-3959

17791 FJORD DRIVE, NE, DOOR 112
POULSBO, WA 98370
(360) 598-2342
FAX: (360) 598-3650

403 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4701
(202) 225-6311
FAX: (202) 226-1606

Jay.Inslee@mail.house.gov
www.house.gov/inslee

March 22, 2006

Commissioner Mark Everson
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20224

Commissioner Everson:

I have serious concerns about a pending IRS proposal to weaken privacy protections for American taxpayers by allowing tax preparers to sell information provided on returns to marketers and data-collection companies.

As you well are aware, tax returns contain extremely sensitive personal and financial information, including income, home ownership, employment status, investments and other assets, number and age of children, type of vehicle, and even charitable donations. Congress rightly recognized the highly private nature of this information and prohibited tax preparers from using tax-filing information for any other purpose than preparing the taxpayer's return. Under your proposal, this data now could be sold to the highest bidder.

In an age of security breaches and identity theft, it's more important than ever to safeguard the treasure trove of sensitive information in tax filings. Uncle Sam should be setting the gold standard for protecting personal information, not creating a pot of gold for data brokers and other corporations. As such, I urge you to prohibit tax preparers from disclosing information gleaned from tax returns to other parties, such as marketers and data brokers.

As your agency develops its new rule on sharing information in tax returns, please keep these concerns in mind. I look forward to your response to my letter.

Sincerely,


JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress