

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sen. Cardin writes periodic columns for Maryland publications. The following column about the need for seniors and the disabled to file for their stimulus rebate may be of interest to your readers. Please contact Susan Sullam at susan_sullam@cardin.senate.gov if you have any questions.

PRECEDDE: Senator Cardin is a member of five committees: Foreign Relations, Judiciary, Environment and Public Works, Budget and Small Business. His web site is: cardin.senate.gov

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO FILE FOR YOUR STIMULUS REBATE

By U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

Almost 100,000 Marylanders have left money on the table because they have failed to file for their stimulus rebate. Most of these individuals are elderly or disabled veterans who do not normally file a tax return. This year, they need to file to get their rebate check.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has accounted for 74% of Social Security and Veterans Affairs (VA) beneficiaries out of 20 million initially identified as being potential recipients for the stimulus checks. Approximately five million individuals nationally and 100,000 in Maryland who are eligible have failed to file a return.

It's important that these individuals realize the importance of filing and understand that the stimulus payment will have no impact on other federal benefits they may receive. The stimulus payment is not taxable.

To help get the word out, the IRS is partnering with the American Association of Retired People (AARP), the National Council of Aging, the United Way, the National Disabilities Institute and other agencies to ensure that those who need to file do so by October 15. That is the deadline for filing to receive a stimulus rebate by Dec. 31, 2008. No rebate checks will be mailed after that date.

For people who have no tax liability or tax filing requirement, there is a minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 for married couples). To be eligible for the minimum payment, individuals must have at least \$3,000 in qualifying income, which includes any combination of earned income, nontaxable combat pay and certain benefit payments from Social Security, VA and Railroad Retirement.

For more information, go to: www.irs.gov or call the IRS Rebate Hotline, 866-234-2942.

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