

## Private collectors can abuse delinquents

“Bill to privatize IRS collections” [News, May 18] reports that Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) has requested that a provision be inserted into a bill dealing with expiration of certain tax breaks. The bill would require all “inactive tax receivables” to be assigned to private debt collectors.

As a tax attorney with more than 40 years of experience, and having dealt with not only Internal Revenue Service collection officers but also private debt collectors, I am extremely concerned that Schumer’s proposal is not in the best interests of taxpayers, not only in New York State, but nationwide.

Specifically, private collection agencies do not have the same restrictions when seeking to collect tax debts. In addition, the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service, which helps

taxpayers in emergency situations, would not have oversight of private collection agencies.

Previously, when private collection agencies were given permission to collect IRS tax debts, complaints of harassment, embarrassment and other significant horrors were reported.

I believe that Schumer is taking a step back from reforms the IRS put in place at the urging of Congress to protect taxpayers. It is interesting to note that two upstate collection agencies would likely benefit from Schumer’s proposal. I believe he is looking to help two corporations at the expense of his larger constituency in New York and around the country.

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