



BY BOB HOLT

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You know our friends at the Internal Revenue Service are overdoing it when even the National Taxpayer Advocate finds the nation's tax laws confusing.

In her 2012 report to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance, National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson said tax reform was the most serious problem facing taxpayers today due to the complexity of the Tax Code.

[According](#) to Forbes, taxpayers spend six billion hours a year trying to file their taxes. Congress has made nearly 5,000 changes to the Tax Code since 2001, and it has reached about four million words, about the same as seven versions of War and Peace.

An Associated Press report on NorthJersey.com [said](#) that about 90 percent of people filing their taxes will use a tax preparer or computer software to do the job by April.

Olson's report also noted that the IRS has not been doing enough to help taxpayers who were victims of identity theft. Her report said, [according](#) to USA Today, "Victims who come to the IRS for assistance today will routinely need to speak with multiple employees and wait more than six months to have their issues resolved."

Cases heard by the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit in federal fiscal year 2012 were up

nearly 80% from the previous year.

And there's more good news. Reuters [reports](#) that the IRS said due to tax law changes relating to the fiscal cliff issues, they could not process any returns filed before January 30. And late-changing forms would delay a number of returns until late February or early March.

The IRS said that it paid 90 percent of its refunds in fewer than 21 days in 2012 and expects to do the same in 2013, but they are not making estimates on when taxpayers can look to receive their refunds.