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down-to-the-wire decision making has had an unsavory side effect.

Jan. 10, 2013

We narrowly avoided going over the fiscal cliff earlier this month, but Congress' down-to-the-wire decision making has had an unsavory side effect.

Tuesday the [IRS announced](#) that tax return filing season won't start until the end of January. That delay is expected to impact the [18 million people](#) who would normally file their taxes this month.

If you're waiting for that refund check to pay off holiday purchases or to finance a vacation, you're going to have to wait until Jan. 30, 8 days after the initial start date of Jan. 22.

You can blame Congress. "When congress waits until the second of January and taxes normally kick off on the 10th or 12 of January, the IRS just doesn't have enough time," says Andy Stadler of [Stadler and Co. Tax Service](#).

The people this delay will affect the most are the ones who rely on it the most. "This is a younger family. They just got W2s, maybe a couple of kids. Their tax return is real simple, but they need their refund pretty quick because they're a younger family-maybe they need it to pay their rent, buy food, pay off their Christmas credit card bill," says Stadler.

The tax refund filing delay will also delay when you get your refund. Stadler says not to expect refunds until the end of February.

"That affects my family because my family is depending on the same tax check to come, so that affects my family in a way to where 'man, we're losing out on extra money. What's going on?'" says Dustin Pruitt, a student at Ivy Tech Community College.

Stadler says many people build their financial life around their refund-using them to pay off debt or to make a big purchase. The companies that depend on those purchases will also feel the impact. "It's really affected us

as far as layaway, special orders, people pre-planning for the spring. They've already come in and made

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30],” he says.

Some taxpayers who need to use particular forms will have to wait even longer. For example, people who want to take advantage of residential energy credits or general business credits can't file until February or March.

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