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December 22, 2017

To Our Valued Clients and Friends:

Today President Donald Trump signed into law H.R.1 known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which makes widespread changes to the Internal Revenue Code. We have listed below some of the highlights of this legislation.

Lower tax rates. Effective for 2018, the corporate income tax rate is being lowered from 35% to 21%. Effective for 2018, individual income tax rates will be lowered through 2025. Individual taxable income will be subject to seven brackets, taxed at 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35% and 37% marginal tax rates. But, barring further legislation, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act changes will expire (sunset) after 2025, and the pre-Tax Cuts and Jobs Act brackets and rates will once again be in effect.

The general plan of action to take advantage of lower tax rates next year would be to defer income into next year. Some possibilities follow:

- If you are an employee who believes a bonus is coming your way before year end, consider asking your employer to delay payment of the bonus until next year.

- If you are thinking of converting a regular IRA to a Roth IRA, postpone your move until next year. That way you'll defer income from the conversion until next year and have it taxed at lower rates. If you have already converted a regular IRA to a Roth IRA but now you question the wisdom of that move as the tax on the conversion will be subject to a lower tax rate next year, you can unwind the conversion to the Roth IRA by doing a recharacterization-making a trustee-to-trustee

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transfer from the Roth to a regular IRA. This way, the original conversion to a Roth IRA will be cancelled out. But you must complete the recharacterization before year-end. Starting next year, you won't be able to use a recharacterization to unwind a regular-IRA-to-Roth-IRA conversion.

- If you run a business that renders services and operates on the cash basis, the income you earn is not taxed until your customers pay. As a result, if you hold off on billings until next year, or until so late in the year that no payment can be received this year, you will succeed in deferring income until next year.

- If your business is on the accrual basis, deferral of income till next year is difficult but not impossible. For example, you might, with due regard to business considerations, be able to postpone completion of a job until 2018, or defer deliveries of merchandise until next year. Taking one or more of these steps would postpone your right to payment, and the income from the job or the merchandise, until next year. Keep in mind that the rules in this area are complex and may require a tax professional's input.

- The reduction or cancellation of debt generally results in taxable income to the debtor. If you are planning to make a deal with creditors involving debt reduction, consider postponing action until January to defer any debt cancellation income into 2018.

Disappearing deductions, larger standard deduction. **Beginning next year, many popular tax deductions are going to be repealed or reduced in exchange for a larger standard deduction. Here's what you can do about this right now:**

- Individuals (as opposed to businesses) will only be able to claim an itemized deduction of up to $10,000 ($5,000 for a married taxpayer filing a separate return) for the total of (1) state and local property taxes; and (2) state and local income taxes. To avoid this limitation, pay the last installment of estimated state and local taxes for 2017 no later than Dec. 31, 2017, rather than on the 2018 due date. However, if you are subject to the alternative minimum tax (AMT) in 2017, this strategy will not be beneficial. But do not prepay in 2017 a state income tax bill that will be imposed next year - Congress says such a prepayment will not be deductible in 2017.

- The new tax legislation does not specifically repeal the itemized deduction for charitable contributions; however, because most other itemized deductions would be eliminated in exchange for a larger standard deduction ($12,000 for single filers and $24,000 for joint filers), charitable contributions after 2017 may not yield a tax benefit for many. If you think you will fall in this category, consider accelerating some charitable giving into 2017.

- The new law temporarily boosts itemized deductions for medical expenses. For 2017 and 2018 these expenses can be claimed as itemized deductions to the extent they exceed a floor equal to 7.5% of your adjusted gross income (AGI). Before the new law, the floor was 10% of AGI, except for 2017 it was 7.5% of AGI for age-65-or-older taxpayers. But keep in mind that next year many individuals will have to claim the standard deduction because many itemized deductions have been eliminated. If you will not be able to itemize deductions after this year, but will be able to do so this year, consider accelerating "discretionary" medical expenses into this year. For example, before the end of the year, get new glasses or contacts, or see if you can

squeeze in expensive dental work such as an implant.

***Other year-end strategies.* Here are some other "last minute" moves that could wind up saving tax dollars:**

- The new law substantially increases the alternative minimum tax (AMT) exemption amount, beginning next year. There may be steps you can take now to take advantage of that increase. For example, the exercise of an incentive stock option (ISO) can result in AMT complications. So, if you hold any ISOs, it may be wise to postpone exercising them until next year. And, for various deductions, e.g., depreciation and the investment interest expense deduction, the deduction will be curtailed if you are subject to the AMT. If the higher 2018 AMT exemption means you won't be subject to the 2018 AMT, it may be worthwhile, via tax elections or postponed transactions, to push such deductions into 2018.

- Like-kind exchanges are a popular way to avoid current tax on the appreciation of an asset, but after Dec. 31, 2017, such swaps will be possible only if they involve real estate that is not held primarily for sale. So if you are considering a like-kind swap of other types of property, do so before year-end. The new law says the old, far more liberal like-kind exchange rules will continue to apply to exchanges of personal property if you either dispose of the relinquished property or acquire the replacement property on or before Dec. 31, 2017.

- For decades, businesses have been able to deduct 50% of the cost of entertainment directly related to or associated with the active conduct of a business. For example, if you take a client to a nightclub after a business meeting, you can deduct 50% of the cost if strict substantiation requirements are met. But under the new law, for

amounts paid or incurred after Dec. 31, 2017, there is no deduction for such expenses. So if you've been thinking of entertaining clients and business associates, do so before year-end. The cost of business meals remains deductible at 50%.

- Under current rules, alimony payments generally are an above-the line deduction for the payor and included in the income of the payee. Under the new law, alimony payments would not be deductible by the payor or includible in the income of the payee, generally effective for any divorce decree or separation agreement executed after 2017. If you're in the middle of a divorce or separation agreement and you will wind up on the paying end, it would be worth your while to wrap things up before year end. On the other hand, if you will wind up on the receiving end, it would be worth your while to wrap things up next year.

- The new law suspends the deduction for moving expenses after 2017 (except for certain members of the Armed Forces), and also suspends the tax-free reimbursement of employment-related moving expenses. So if you are in the midst of a job-related move, try to incur your deductible moving expenses before year-end, or if the move is connected with a new job and you are getting reimbursed by your new employer, press for a reimbursement to be made to you before year-end.

- Under current law, various employee business expenses, e.g., employee home office expenses and investment expenses are deductible as itemized deductions if those expenses plus certain other expenses exceed 2% of adjusted gross income. The new law suspends the deduction for these expenses paid after 2017. So, we should determine whether paying additional employee business expenses, or investment advisory expenses in 2017, that you would otherwise pay in 2018, would provide

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you with an additional 2017 tax benefit. Also, now would be a good time to talk to your employer about changing your compensation arrangement-for example, your employer reimbursing you for the types of employee business expenses that you have been paying yourself up to now, and lowering your salary by an amount that approximates those expenses. In most cases, such reimbursements would not be subject to tax.

Please keep in mind that what is described herein represents only some of the year-end moves that should be considered in light of this recent tax reform legislation. If you would like more details about any aspect of how the proposed legislation may affect you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

From all of us here at Rainer & Company, Happy Holidays!

Very truly yours,

Rainer & Company