



Department of
Taxation

(For immediate release)

More than One-Half Billion Dollars in Attempted Tax Theft Stopped by Ohio Department of Taxation

Tax Commissioner Joe Testa Expects Fraud to Continue as a Large-Scale Problem

COLUMBUS, Ohio – December 8, 2015 – Since the flood of tax fraud started in 2014 in Ohio and nationally, the Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) has blocked more than 297,000 fraudulent income tax returns attempting to steal \$533.7 million in refunds. Tax Commissioner Joe Testa expects those numbers to grow.

In 2015, ODT saw a nearly 400 percent increase from the previous filing season in the number of fraudulent refund requests, but for significantly smaller amounts. Through November, ODT intercepted 232,898 suspicious returns claiming \$256.5 million in illegitimate refunds. Fortunately, enhanced security measures have enabled the department to combat these ever-changing schemes.

“Our efforts have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars,” said Ohio Tax Commissioner Joe Testa. “While these would-be thieves will continue to craft new strategies to steal from Ohioans, we’ll keep finding ways to stop them.”

Testa says the state continues to develop more information and understanding of the tax fraud schemes and is using that knowledge to further strengthen security efforts. He says an **ID Confirmation Quiz** will again be employed to verify taxpayer identities and validate refund requests.

“The quiz has been and will continue to be instrumental in stopping fraud,” said Testa. “We appreciate the taxpayer’s time in taking this extra step before receiving their refund. We also heard their feedback and made some changes to improve the process and provide a better experience for taxpayers who take the quiz.”

Testa says one important change this year is that security measures will be expanded to protect the identity of minors, as well as adults. He says criminals are also utilizing the identities of minors and if ODT identifies a situation where it appears a child’s identity has been compromised, the state will notify the household. This action will allow the tax filer to take additional steps to thwart illegitimate use of that minor’s identity.

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