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Illinois Gains on Identity Theft and Tax Refund Fraud Prevention, Urges Taxpayer Vigilance

SPRINGFIELD – Since 2015, Illinois has stopped more than \$120 million in attempted identity theft and tax refund fraud thanks to increased data analytics and partnerships with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other states. As criminals continue efforts to perpetrate fraud this tax season, the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) is reminding taxpayers that we’re all in this fight together.

“With technology and analytics, the Illinois Department of Revenue continues to thwart efforts by criminals to perpetuate tax fraud and identity theft,” said David Harris, IDOR Director designate. “Last year, these efforts kept an additional \$37.2 million in tax dollars from falling into the hands of criminals. While IDOR will continue and intensify its prevention efforts, we emphasize to taxpayers that they are the frontline in the fight against identity theft and tax fraud attempts. By utilizing commonsense steps, taxpayers can reduce the likelihood of falling prey to many of the most common deceptions.”

IDOR suggests taxpayers protect personal information and tax data by following some simple guidelines: use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections, selecting automatic updates; be aware of phishing emails and phone scams that attempt to trick individuals out of personal information and money; and treat personal information as you would cash – don’t leave it lying around.

More than 1.85 million taxpayers have filed their Illinois tax return within the first month of the 2019 Tax Filing Season. As fraud prevention efforts continue, taxpayers are reminded that if they receive an identity verification letter from IDOR, they may now authenticate their information electronically through IDOR’s free online account management program, [MyTax Illinois](#). In the past, identity authentication required written documentation sent via paper mail, creating a time-consuming process for the taxpayer and IDOR.

For additional information and resources on reporting and preventing identity theft and tax fraud, please visit IDOR’s website at: tax.illinois.gov.

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Background

In calendar year 2018, over six million individual income tax returns were filed with IDOR. Of those, 86% were filed electronically. Over 4 million or 66% of those who filed an individual income tax return received a refund.

2018 anti-fraud and identity theft detection and prevention efforts led to an increase of \$37.2 million in verified savings when compared to 2017.

The filing deadline to submit 2018 individual income tax returns or file an Automatic Extension Payment (IL-505-I) is Monday, April 15, 2019.

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