



For Further Information

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Statement of Bill Cobb, H&R Block President & CEO

November 3, 2016

Since this public-private partnership formed some 20 months ago, we have progressed from initial ideas on how to combat tax refund fraud, to developing clear operating concepts, and now, to executing concrete measures that are materially impacting the fraudster's actions.

Through it all, Commissioner Koskinen has led the way with thoughtful and focused leadership. Combined with the flexibility and close collaboration of state officials and members of the industry, the working group has accomplished much on behalf of American taxpayers. I especially want to compliment the Federation of Tax Administrators and the state leaders for developing and implementing a standardized agreement for e-filing certification. This standardization is essential to our overall efforts and has streamlined our preparations for tax season this year. Without it, the fraudsters will continue to attack the weakest parts of the system.

Another success story is the establishment of the Information Sharing and Analysis Center. While we will likely not have all state signatories to the ISAC finalized by the start of tax season 2017, the capability will largely be in place. Our momentum is irreversible and the ISAC will do much to synthesize and share information among all the players.

That said, we cannot rest. We must remain unrelenting in our actions against the ever-evolving attempts to steal refunds. To that end, the working group's information campaign this year to educate tax preparers on the threat is another step in the right direction. The real focus of this campaign is the community of small and independent preparers. They do not have the systemic protections in place of the large, nationally-branded preparers, so this campaign is clearly needed for the more vulnerable members of the tax preparation category.

Finally, H&R Block looks forward to working with the Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee as it assumes an advisory role to the working group going forward. The fact that the security summit efforts will be able to continue with the permanency of ETAAC speaks to the maturity of the working group and to the commitment of all members to building an enduring capability.

In closing, the H&R Block team looks forward to continuing the substantive progress of the working group as, together, we strive to better protect taxpayers in 2017 and beyond. Thank you.

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