

CONTROLLER STEVE WESTLY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

300 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
916.445.2636
www.controller.ca.gov

PR06:019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FEBRUARY 16, 2006

CONTACT: RUSS LOPEZ
916-445-2636

Westly Urges People to Avoid Hassles and Get Tax Refunds in 7 days with CalFile

Says Filing Help Available on Web, Phone and at 1,800 Sites Statewide

SACRAMENTO – State Controller Steve Westly today urged Californians to avoid paperwork and get their state tax refunds in a week or less by filing electronically with the free *CalFile* program. He also highlighted free filing help that's available online, by telephone or at more than 1,800 locations statewide.

“People who e-file can get their refunds in seven days or less and avoid post office hassles and paperwork,” Controller Westly said. “If you sign up for direct deposit, you can get your refund even faster. E-file also saves the state money, which we can use for schools, parks and roads.”

“Doing your taxes are a pain in the neck, but free help is available online, on the phone or at more than 1,800 locations statewide,” Controller Westly added.

6.4 million Californians are eligible for *CalFile*, and millions more can use other free e-filing services available at www.ftb.ca.gov.

Controller Westly highlighted the state's free tax filing service that is available to millions of senior, non-English speaking, disabled and low-income Californians. The 1,800 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling centers located across the state offer free tax help and filing preparation. These sites are staffed by volunteers trained by the state Franchise Tax Board and IRS.

The FTB provides a 24-hour automated, toll-free helpline at (800) 338-0505. To speak with a customer service representative, taxpayers can call (800) 852-5711 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Help will be available on weeknights until 10 p.m. beginning March 27. Help is also available at www.ftb.ca.gov.

Controller Westly said nearly two-thirds of taxpayers get refunds. The average refund amount last year was \$765.

###