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Westly Reminds CA of Free Tax Help Online, By Phone or In Person as April 17 Approaches

SACRAMENTO –With one month to go before the April 17th tax deadline, State Controller and Franchise Tax Board Chair Steve Westly today reminded Californians that free tax help is available online, over the phone and in person at 1,800 locations statewide. He also urged Californians to take advantage of the e-file programs available at www.ftb.ca.gov.

“*E-filers* can get their refunds in seven days or less and avoid post office hassles and paperwork,” Controller Westly said. “Free help is available online, over the phone or at more than 1,800 locations statewide,” Controller Westly added.

Controller Westly said the free tax filing services are 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. Volunteers trained by the state Franchise Tax Board and IRS staff these sites.

Early E-filing statistics show an increase over last year by 8 percent for taxpayer home computer e-filing and 5 percent by tax professionals. The FTB offers a free tax filing program called CalFile that is available to 6.4 million of the state’s nearly 15 million personal income tax filers.

“For every tax return filed electronically, the state saves a dollar in processing costs. That’s money we can use for schools, parks and roads,” Westly said.

“Clearly with one month remaining before the tax deadline, we have a long way to go,” said Board of Equalization Chair and FTB Member John Chiang. “More than half of all personal income tax filings arrive at FTB during the last few weeks. This year, taxpayers have until Monday, April 17 to file since the traditional April 15 due date falls on a Saturday. About one million returns are filed on extension, which falls on October 16 this year.”

For taxpayers in need of assistance, check the FTB’s Web site at www.ftb.ca.gov or call (800) 852-5711 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and beginning March 27, until 10 p.m. Representatives are also available on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through April 15.

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