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Westly Urges Last Minute Tax Filers to Take Advantage of Free Help

April 17 Tax Deadline Fast Approaching

SACRAMENTO – State Controller and Franchise Tax Board Chair Steve Westly today stood with volunteers who offer free tax assistance and urged last minute tax filers to take advantage of the free help still available.

“There is hope for people who are doing their taxes at the last minute,” Westly said. “You can get free help in person, on the phone and on the Web.”

Controller Westly thanked the thousands of tax help volunteers throughout California for participating in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, a free service offered by the Franchise Tax Board during the tax filing season from January to April. The program serves millions of seniors, non-English speaking, disabled and low-income Californians by having trained volunteers help with preparing tax returns. There are more than 11,000 volunteers and 1,800 centers located throughout the state.

Westly also reminded Californians that electronically filing tax returns is a fast and efficient way to complete returns by the April 17 deadline. By e-filing, taxpayers that are owed a refund can get it back within 5-7 days versus waiting 6-8 weeks if sending a paper return this close to the deadline. The state offers a free e-filing program *CalFile* that 6.4 million Californians are eligible to use. E-filers have until midnight on the 17th to file their returns.

“Filing a tax return on-line is a true win for taxpayers and a win for the State. E-filers avoid the hassles of paperwork and going to the post office, and the State saves one dollar in processing costs for every return filed electronically,” Westly added.

The Franchise Tax Board Web site at www.ftb.ca.gov offers many e-services and information on refund status, tax forms and answers to frequently asked tax questions. FTB also provides a 24-hour automated, toll-free helpline at (800) 338-0505. Taxpayers who need to speak with a customer service representative can call (800) 852-5711 from 7 a.m.- 10 p.m. on Friday; 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. on Saturday; and 7 a.m.-Midnight on Monday.

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