



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Despite Data Breaches, Progress in the Fight Against Tax Fraud**

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Commissioner Lynne Riley recently traveled to Washington, DC to take part in the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Annual Security Summit to discuss the progress in the fight against tax fraud. In addition to the IRS, other State tax authorities and the tax preparation industry were on hand to collaborate on ways to continue making strides against tax fraud.

Combatting tax fraud is especially important considering the amount of personal information that has been compromised over the past few years with several large-scale data breaches. Much of what was discussed at the Summit remains confidential, but the IRS touted a 46 percent decrease in identity theft victims from 2015 to 2016, and an approximate 40 percent decrease so far in 2017. A trend which they claim shows fewer criminals are using stolen data to file fraudulent tax returns.

"It is encouraging to see everyone involved in the filing process working together to combat fraud," said Commissioner Riley, "it appears the collaborative effort has led to remarkable strides in both deterring and detecting tax fraud."

While the issuance of refunds has taken longer than in prior years, tax authorities are now more confident they are issuing a refund to the rightful owner of the situation. The Georgia Department of Revenue implemented the Fraud Management Solution system in late 2015 which allowed the DOR to block over \$98 million in refund tax fraud in 2016 and over \$100 million so far in 2017.

Both the IRS and Summit partners will continue the public awareness campaign "Taxes. Security. Together." to remind taxpayers what steps they can take to better protect personal information.

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