



For Immediate Release

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Old California Rules Versus New IRS Tax Preparer Initiative

New Tax Season. New IRS Program. What California taxpayers should know.

Sacramento, CA (December 30, 2014)— Starting in 2015, the [Internal Revenue Service](#) plans to move forward with a new voluntary initiative for tax preparers after a recent court ruling suspended its original plan to enforce tax preparer regulations.

Tax preparers who wish to participate in the IRS voluntary [Annual Filing Season Program](#) will be required to complete tax education courses and pass a test. Some tax preparers who already follow professional standards will be exempt from certain program requirements, including California tax preparers.

Participants will be listed on the IRS website for the public to view starting in 2015. [Attorneys, certified public accountants \(CPAs\)](#) and IRS [enrolled agents \(EAs\)](#), will also be included in the list.

“Our only concern is that people might get confused on what the IRS is doing and what California law already requires for tax preparers,” said Celeste Heritage, administrator for the [California Tax Education Council \(CTEC\)](#), a state-mandated nonprofit organization that manages the registration of unlicensed tax preparers.

“The IRS program is voluntary. California’s program is law,” said Heritage.

California requires anyone who prepares tax returns for a fee, and is not a licensed attorney, CPA or EA, to register as a tax preparer with CTEC. Each [CTEC-registered tax preparer \(CRTP\)](#) must complete tax education courses each year and obtain a bond to protect clients against fraud.

Tax preparers who participate in the IRS program must complete federal continuing tax education requirements, pass a tax refresher course and test, plus have an IRS [Preparer Tax Identification Number \(PTIN\)](#). Tax preparers, including CRTPs, who have already met professional standards, are exempt from the tax refresher course and test.

“Even with the exemptions, not all tax preparers will participate,” said Aaron Gray, CTEC board member. “The IRS website will not include all legal tax preparers in California so it’s important to verify with CTEC on who is legal.”

A federal court ruled in 2013 that the IRS needs Congressional approval before it can regulate tax preparers, which is why the new program is strictly voluntary.

“I think the hope with this voluntary program is to keep the momentum going while the IRS tries to get Congressional approval,” said Heritage.

CTEC is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1997 by the California State Legislature to protect taxpayers against fraud and incompetent tax preparers. To report questionable tax preparers, visit www.ctec.org or call (877) 850-CTEC.

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