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## 2018 Public Awareness Campaign Targets “Ghost” Tax Preparers

CTEC is partnering with Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Public Affairs to expand its public awareness campaign to target tax preparers who do not sign client tax returns, also known as “ghost tax preparers.”

FTB will submit a press release announcing the partnership. CTEC and FTB will work together during the 2018 tax season to warn California taxpayers about ghost tax preparers through media relations and social media.

CTEC will focus all of its advertising and public awareness campaigns to drive traffic to its microsite, [ReportTaxPreparerFraud.org](http://ReportTaxPreparerFraud.org), to help educate taxpayers about ghost tax preparers. The microsite will be in English, Spanish and Mandarin.

In addition to the partnership, CTEC will post billboards and bus signs throughout the Los Angeles market in English, Spanish and Mandarin. All CTEC paid advertisements will promote its microsite. The decision to advertise in Los Angeles is based on enforcement reports from the Franchise Tax Board (FTB).

Internet advertisements will also run during the 2018 tax season to educate California taxpayers about ghost tax preparers and how to find a California

approved tax preparer.

The goal of the campaign is to...

- Strategically target California taxpayers who are considered at high risk.
- Make the message more memorable and shareable through social media.
- Establish an easier method for taxpayers to find a California approved tax preparer.

Through the microsite, CTEC can better track the percentage of taxpayers who took action after seeing a CTEC advertisement, social media post or media report.

CTEC and FTB have also discussed expanding CTEC enforcement to include pursuing ghost tax preparers.

## What is a Microsite?

A microsite is a separate website commonly developed by organizations or companies that want to measure the effectiveness of a specific campaign. It usually takes more creative leaps in design, is focused on one message concept and has a different website address.

## Cybercriminals Attacking Tax Professionals

Tax professionals are increasingly becoming targets of cybercriminals seeking access to client data. Criminals use the stolen information to file fraudulent tax returns for refunds. Be prepared to protect your clients and yourself by taking a few critical steps. Visit [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and search "Data theft information for tax professionals."

Should you experience a data compromise, there are certain basic steps you should take. To learn more, visit [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and search "What to do if you suffer from a data breach."

### Mark Your Calendar! You are Invited!

**CTEC meetings are open  
to the public**

May 17 - 18, 2018  
Sacramento, CA

November 15 - 16, 2018  
Coronado Island, CA

Please call **877-850-2832** if  
you would like to attend.

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## Registered, Licensed or Certified?

When you need to find a word to describe your status as a professional tax preparer, you should use the word "registered." CTEC Registered Tax Preparers (CRTPs) are not licensed, enrolled, certified or public. Never use those terms. It is false advertising.

Unlike the IRS, State Bar and California Board of Accountancy, which license or certify its group, CTEC was not given that kind of authority from the California State Legislature. To license or certify, some type of enforcement power is required.

It is the reason why CTEC partners with the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) to enforce tax preparer compliance. CTEC does not have any enforcement authority other than to manage the registration of nonexempt tax preparers.

## Late Renewals Due Soon

CTEC Registered Tax Preparers (CRTPs) who did not renew with CTEC by the October 31, 2017 deadline have until January 15, 2018 to renew late and pay the \$55 late fee. CRTPs who fail to meet the late renewal deadline will be required to start over, re-take the 60 hour qualifying education course and register as a new tax preparer.

## Government Partners

*CTEC partners with government organizations to help reach taxpayers and tax preparers regarding California requirements for professional tax preparation.*

### Internal Revenue Service

[irs.gov](http://irs.gov)

Tax Professional Information  
[irs.gov/taxprofessionals](http://irs.gov/taxprofessionals)

AFSP Information

[irs.gov/tax-professionals/annual-filing-season-program](http://irs.gov/tax-professionals/annual-filing-season-program)

### Franchise Tax Board

[ftb.ca.gov](http://ftb.ca.gov)

Tax Professional Information  
[ftb.ca.gov/professionals](http://ftb.ca.gov/professionals)

Tax News Subscriptions

[ftb.ca.gov/professionals/taxnews](http://ftb.ca.gov/professionals/taxnews)

### Covered California

[coveredca.com](http://coveredca.com)

1095 Information

[coveredca.com/members/form-1095-a](http://coveredca.com/members/form-1095-a)

Find Local Help

[coveredca.com/get-help/local](http://coveredca.com/get-help/local)

Special Enrollment Period  
Information

[coveredca.com/individuals-and-families/getting-covered/special-enrollment](http://coveredca.com/individuals-and-families/getting-covered/special-enrollment)

According to California law, CRTPs cannot prepare tax returns for a fee until their registration is current with CTEC.

## 2017 Enforcement Results

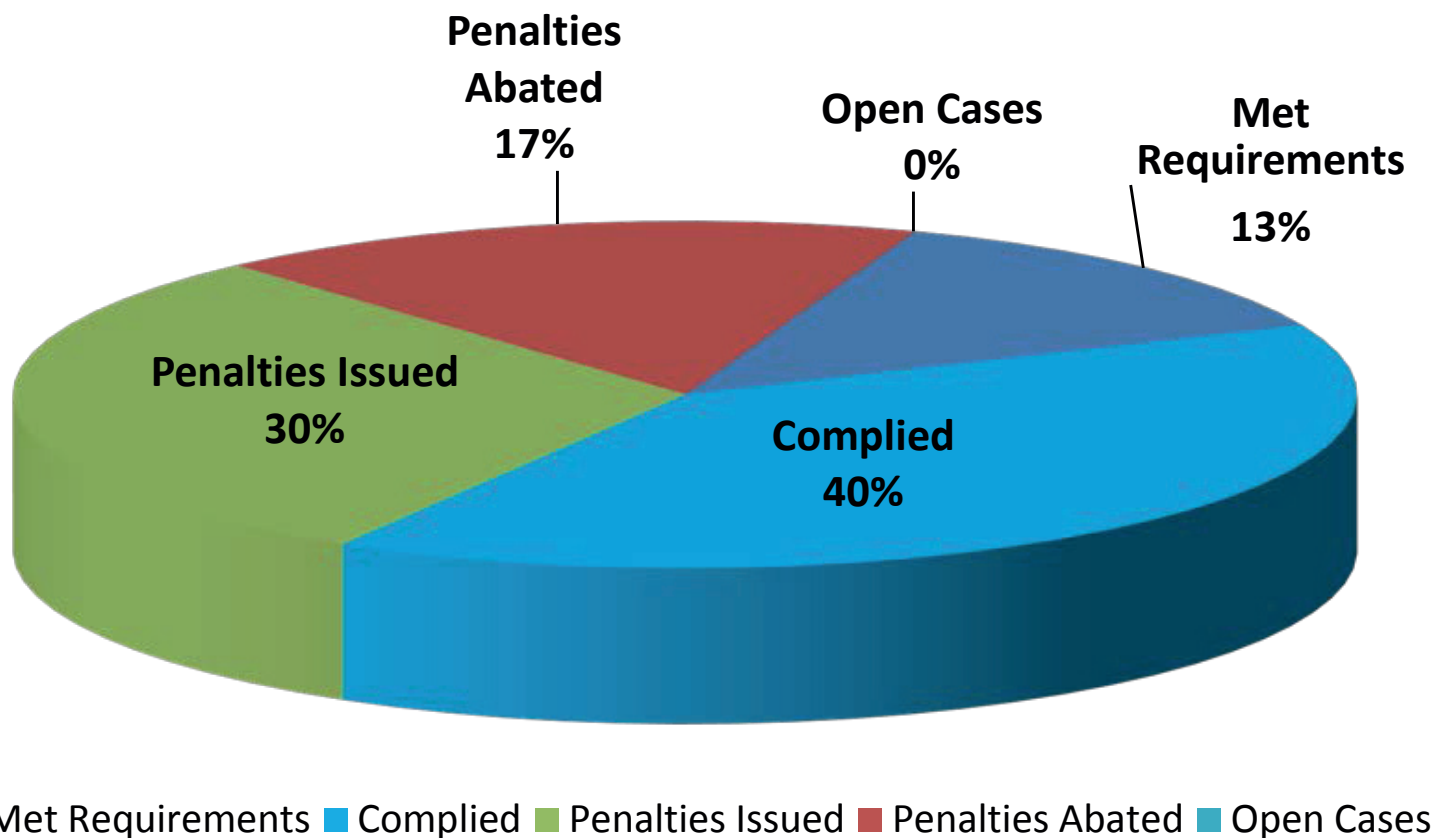
Unregistered tax preparers who are caught preparing, or assisting with preparing, tax returns for a fee will be issued a \$2,500 penalty letter from the Franchise Tax Board (FTB). They have 90 days to register with CTEC before the penalty is enforced.

If a tax preparer does not comply, the \$2,500 penalty is assessed. If a tax preparer still fails to comply the next year, a \$5,000 penalty will be issued each year until they either register with CTEC or agree to stop preparing tax returns for a fee.

CTEC pays for the entire enforcement program. All penalties collected by FTB are deposited into the state's general fund.

To report an unregistered tax preparer, visit [ctec.org](http://ctec.org).

## 2016/2017 Results



Results as of October 2017

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit No. 1789

