



United States Congress Joint Economic Committee

SCAMS ALERT | April 2026

ALERT: Tax Season Scams

Ahead of the April 15th deadline for tax filing, Joint Economic Committee Chairman David Schweikert (R-AZ), Ranking Member Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Vice Chairman Eric Schmitt (R-MO), and Senior House Democrat Don Beyer (D-VA) are warning the public about common tax season scams. Criminals frequently use AI to impersonate the [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#) and [tax software companies](#) in order to steal from tax filers. Some scammers [even file tax returns using stolen identities](#) and then collect refunds owed to their unsuspecting victims.

Nearly [one in four Americans](#) have reported being victimized by tax season scams, which are increasingly common:

- A scam call blocking company identified a [400 percent](#) increase in fraudulent calls impersonating the IRS between January and late February 2026.
- A [security firm](#) found an average of 43 fake tax websites every day from September 2025 to mid-February 2026.
- The IRS reported more than [600 social media impersonators](#) of the agency during fiscal year 2025.

The alert is part of ongoing Congressional [efforts](#) to address the soaring rates of scams, which accounted for [nearly half a trillion dollars](#) in losses last year and surpass the [drug trade](#) as an illicit industry. It follows previous alerts on [holiday shopping](#), [holiday travel](#), and [Super Bowl](#) scams.

Below are some practical ways to spot and protect against common tax season scams, including tips from the [IRS](#), [AARP](#), the [Better Business Bureau \(BBB\)](#), and [other experts](#).

Tips to Avoid Common Tax Season Scams

IRS Impersonation Scams: Learn the common [signs](#) of IRS imposter scams and take steps to protect yourself

- Be wary of phone calls or digital outreach claiming to be from the [IRS](#), which almost always initiates contact by mail.
 - [Scammers](#) can spoof caller ID and use tools like AI deepfakes to imitate the IRS in calls, emails, and texts.

- The [IRS](#) will *never* message you on social media and will only email or text in limited circumstances and *never* to demand immediate payment.
- If you get a suspicious message, [never scan QR codes or click on links](#), which can contain malware or direct you to a website that steals your information.
- **Be on alert for [outreach](#) claiming to be from the IRS that is urgent or threatening, requests identifying information, or demands payment through nontraditional methods. The [IRS will never](#):**
 - Threaten to call law enforcement
 - Demand your driver's license or business license
 - [Demand immediate](#) payment or payment through a nontraditional payment method such as a gift card, crypto, or money wire
 - Direct you to a website that is not IRS.gov
- **Verify any communications that purport to be from the IRS with the IRS directly.**
 - Confirm that you are using the official IRS.gov website and not a sham website. Look for suspicious signs like [subtle misspellings and extra letters or words](#) in the URL.
 - Call the IRS [help line](#) at 800-829-1040 or create an IRS account [online](#) for up-to-date information on your tax records.
 - Verify letters and notices on the IRS [website](#).
- **Protect yourself from identity thieves by using an [IRS-issued identity protection PIN](#) instead of your Social Security number.**

Third-Party Preparer Scams: Take extra precautions when working with third-party tax services or other non-IRS tax entities

- **Research unfamiliar tax preparers and be wary of offers that seem too good to be true.**
 - Research unfamiliar companies on sites like the [Better Business Bureau](#).
 - [Watch out](#) for tax preparers who demand high upfront fees or [guarantee large refunds](#).
 - Verify a preparer's professionally required Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN) on the IRS [website](#), and avoid tax preparers who refuse to provide their PTIN.
- **Keep an eye out for scammers who [impersonate](#) reputable tax preparation companies.**
 - Verify unexpected communications by calling the number on the company's official website.

Information for Victims

If you think you have been the victim of a scam, please visit [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud) and/or contact local law enforcement.