

# Clarification of IRS Weekly Tax Filing Season Data

February 22, 2019

**Washington** – A U.S. Department of the Treasury Spokesperson issued the following statement today clarifying the weekly tax filing season *statistics* issued by the IRS:

“We recognize there is significant interest this year in the tax filing season statistics released by the IRS. We understand this data has been released for years, and we want to continue the practice to support transparency.

“As we have noted, data this early in the filing season has many aberrations and isn’t useful in drawing broad conclusions on refunds overall. There are many factors that impact refunds on a weekly basis that will normalize over time and lead to useful conclusions.

“This week, for instance, the IRS began processing refunds that included the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. The impact of these credits has significantly increased the average refund to \$2,640 this week from \$1,949 last week. You will note that while this is a dramatic increase week over week, it is a decrease from 2018 figures for this same week. What isn’t apparent in the data released today is that it only accounts for less than half of EITC and CTC payments to be processed in 2019, whereas all such credits had been paid through this same period in 2018. As a result, comparing weekly data is misleading and confusing.

“It is also important to realize that there is a difference between someone’s tax liability and their tax refund. The size of someone’s tax refund says nothing about whether their taxes have gone up or down. As we have said, most people are seeing the benefits of the tax cut in larger paychecks throughout the year, instead of tax refunds that are the result of people overpaying the government.

“Over a longer period of time, this data will become more useful in comparing tax filing statistics for the 2019 filing season.”

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