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IRS Announces Effort to Help Struggling Consumers Get a Fresh Start

[Tax relief expert](#) says that major changes made to lien process are unlikely to result in tax relief for those who owe \$20,000 or more.

Encino, CA — In a new effort to help consumers with delinquent back taxes [avoid tax liens](#) and become compliant in these economically challenging times, the IRS recently announced “a series of new steps” in the tax lien filing practices.

While these tax relief efforts from the IRS would seem to be welcome news, tax resolution experts have little hope that these changes will result in much of a break for the consumers who need it most. The recent IRS announcement also referred to the 2008 pledge of lien relief for people trying to refinance or sell their homes, as well as the 2009 initiative to be more flexible with taxpayers facing payment or collection problems.

“From my experience, I have seen little evidence that the IRS Commissioner’s prior promises for tax relief have ever made it down to the rank-and-file folks at the Automated Collection System (ACS) or revenue officer level,” said Rozbruch. “I don’t have a lot of hope that the new announcement will actually result in much help for those who really need it.” This is evidenced by the commissioner’s statement that these new initiatives will help “tens of thousands” of consumers. Meanwhile, there are some 25 to 30 million taxpayers and growing who have IRS problems today.

Changes in the lien filing process include increasing the dollar threshold for filing liens, easing the way to obtain a lien release after the back tax is paid, withdrawing liens in most cases when a delinquent taxpayer enters into a Direct Debit Installment Agreement, easing access to Installment Agreements to reach a greater number of small businesses, and expanding the streamlined [Offer in Compromise](#) program to include more consumers.

“The truth of the matter is, the IRS’s top priority remains the aggressive collection of [unpaid back taxes](#) and audits,” said Rozbruch. “The IRS filed nearly 1.1 million liens in the budget year that ended in September, compared with 426,000 in 2001. Does that look like the IRS is giving consumers a break? Not to me.”

Rozbruch adds that he recommends hiring a [qualified tax attorney](#) or Certified Tax Resolution Specialist to help delinquent consumers avoid or resolve tax liens, while shielding consumers from intrusive IRS collection tactics including levies on wages, assets, savings and checking accounts.

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