

# Political Fix

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## Missouri pays penalty for tax refund delays

By Kurt Erickson St. Louis Post-Dispatch 6 hrs ago

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
**INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN—LONG FORM** **2014 FORM**  
 FOR CALENDAR YEAR JAN. 1—DEC. 31, 2014, OR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING 20\_\_\_, ENDING

**AMENDED RETURN — CHECK HERE**

**NAME AND ADDRESS**

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M. INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_ SUFFIX (JR, SR, III, IV) \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M. INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_ SUFFIX (JR, SR, III, IV) \_\_\_\_\_

IN CARE OF NAME (ATTORNEY, EXECUTOR, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, ETC.) \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY OF RESIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT ADDRESS (INCLUDE APARTMENT NUMBER OR RURAL ROUTE) \_\_\_\_\_ CITY, TOWN, OR POST OFFICE, STATE, AND ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

You may contribute to any one or all of the trust funds on Line 45. See pages 9–10 for a description of each trust fund, as well as trust fund codes to enter on Line 45.

Children's Trust Fund  
  Veterans Trust Fund  
  Elderly Home Delivered Meals Trust Fund  
  Missouri National Guard Trust Fund  
  Workers' Memorial Fund  
  Childhood Lead Testing Fund  
  Missouri Military Family Relief Fund

**PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES THAT APPLY TO YOURSELF OR YOUR SPOUSE AS OF DECEMBER**

<b>AGE 62 THROUGH 64</b>	<b>AGE 65 OR OLDER</b>	<b>BLIND</b>	<b>100% DISABLED</b>	<b>NON-OBLIGATE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> YOURSELF	<input type="checkbox"/> YOURSELF	<input type="checkbox"/> YOURSELF	<input type="checkbox"/> YOURSELF	<input type="checkbox"/> YOURSELF
<input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE

**INCOME**

	Yourself		S
1. Federal adjusted gross income from your 2014 federal return (See worksheet on page 6.) ...	1Y	00	1S
2. Total additions (from Form MO-A, Part 1, Line 6) .....	2Y	00	2S
3. Total income — Add Lines 1 and 2 .....	3Y	00	3S
4. Total subtractions (from Form MO-A, Part 1, Line 14) .....	4Y	00	4S
5. Missouri adjusted gross income — Subtract Line 4 from Line 3 .....	5Y	00	5S
6. Total Missouri adjusted gross income — Add columns 5Y and 5S .....	6		
7. Income percentages — Divide columns 5Y and 5S by total on Line 6. (Must equal 100%) ....	7Y	%	7S

A Missouri income tax Form 1040 for 2014.

**JEFFERSON CITY** • A little-noticed change in state law last year meant extra money in the pockets of some Missouri taxpayers this year.

According to the Missouri Department of Revenue, the state paid out \$315,487 in late fees on income tax refunds to nearly 84,000 people through the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

Although that's just an average of an extra \$3.75 per filer, the totals are notable because that's more than what was doled out by the state in late fees for the previous five years combined.

And, while it may have been a nice reward for having to wait longer for an income tax refund check, the dollars doled out by the state meant that money couldn't be used for education, social services or law enforcement.

Rep. Galen Higdon, R-St. Joseph, sponsored the legislation in an attempt to make sure people got their tax refunds in a timely manner.

"To hold it, hold it and hold it is ludicrous to me," Higdon said Friday. "The whole intent of the bill was to get people off of their, um, desk chairs and do work."

The change received little publicity when it was enacted in 2015. Previously, the state did not have to pay out late fees until an income tax refund had been delayed by 90 days.

This year, however, the state took longer than usual to process some refunds in an attempt to thwart online tax return scammers. By double-checking some returns, the state says it was able to stave off the theft of more than \$11.5 million.

But the time-lag was frustrating for some. The delays drew fire from Gov. Jay Nixon, who ordered agency officials to speed things up by adding temporary staffers or allowing workers more overtime.

That didn't stop the state from crossing the 45 day threshold in some cases.

The amount paid out was far more than officials projected when the measure was being debated in the Legislature.

Officials at the Department of Revenue estimated the cost at about \$60,000, based on 2015 numbers and an interest rate of 0.6 percent. Legislative budget analysts suggested it would be less than \$60,000.

Higdon said the state could hire more people to process tax returns in an attempt to erase the late fees next year.

"If they don't have enough people on staff to return it post haste, then they should address that," he said. "It makes sense to have that money in circulation, rather than sitting in an account. It behooves us to give that money to Missourians."

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## Kurt Erickson

Kurt Erickson is a reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

