


Internal Revenue Code Section 6402(a)

Authority to make credits or refunds



(a) General rule.

In the case of any overpayment, the Secretary, within the applicable period of limitations, may credit the amount of such overpayment, including any interest allowed thereon, against any liability in respect of an internal revenue tax on the part of the person who made the overpayment and shall, subject to subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f), refund any balance to such person.

(b) Credits against estimated tax.

The Secretary is authorized to prescribe regulations providing for the crediting against the estimated income tax for any taxable year of the amount determined by the taxpayer or the Secretary to be an overpayment of the income tax for a preceding taxable year.

(c) Offset of past-due support against overpayments.

The amount of any overpayment to be refunded to the person making the overpayment shall be reduced by the amount of any past-due support (as defined in section 464(c) of the Social Security Act) owed by that person of which the Secretary has been notified by a State in accordance with section 464 of such Act. The Secretary shall remit the amount by which the overpayment is so reduced to the State collecting such support and notify the person making the overpayment that so much of the overpayment as was necessary to satisfy his obligation for past-due support has been paid to the State. The Secretary shall apply a reduction under this subsection first to an amount certified by the State as past due support under section 464 of the Social Security Act before any other reductions allowed by law. This subsection shall be applied to an overpayment prior to its being credited to a person's future liability for an internal revenue tax.

(d) Collection of debts owed to federal agencies.

(1) In general.

Upon receiving notice from any Federal agency that a named person owes a past-due legally enforceable debt (other than past-due support subject to the provisions of subsection (c)) to such agency, the Secretary shall-

(A) reduce the amount of any overpayment payable to such person by the amount of such debt;

(B) pay the amount by which such overpayment is reduced under subparagraph (A) to such agency; and

(C) notify the person making such overpayment that such overpayment has been reduced by an amount necessary to satisfy such debt.

(2) Priorities for offset.

Any overpayment by a person shall be reduced pursuant to this subsection after such overpayment is reduced pursuant to subsection (c) with respect to past-due support collected pursuant to an assignment under section 408(a)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 608(a)(3)) and before such overpayment is reduced pursuant to subsection (e) and (f) and before such overpayment is credited to the future liability for tax of such person pursuant to subsection (b) . If the Secretary receives notice from a Federal agency or agencies of more than one debt subject to paragraph (1) that is owed by a person to such agency or agencies, any overpayment by such person shall be applied against such debts in the order in which such debts accrued.

(3) Treatment of OASDI overpayments.

(A) Requirements. Paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to an OASDI overpayment only if the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 3720A(f) of title 31, United States Code , are met with respect to such overpayment.

(B) Notice; protection of other persons filing joint return.

(i) Notice. In the case of a debt consisting of an OASDI overpayment, if the Secretary determines upon receipt of the notice referred to in paragraph (1) that the refund from which the reduction described in paragraph (1)(A) would be made is based upon a joint return, the Secretary shall-

(I) notify each taxpayer filing such joint return that the reduction is being made from a refund based upon such return, and

(II) include in such notification a description of the procedures to be followed, in the case of a joint return, to protect the share of the refund which may be payable to another person.

(ii) Adjustments based on protections given to other taxpayers on joint return. If the other person filing a joint return with the person owing the OASDI overpayment takes appropriate action to secure his or her proper share of the refund subject to reduction under this subsection , the Secretary shall pay such share to such other person. The Secretary shall deduct the amount of such payment from amounts which are derived from subsequent reductions in refunds under this subsection and are payable to a trust fund referred to in subparagraph (C) .

(C) Deposit of amount of reduction into appropriate trust fund. In lieu of payment, pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) , of the amount of any reduction under this subsection to the Commissioner of Social Security, the Secretary shall deposit such amount in the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund or the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund, whichever is certified to the Secretary as appropriate by the Commissioner of Social Security.

(D) OASDI overpayment. For purposes of this paragraph , the term "OASDI overpayment" means any overpayment of benefits made to an individual under title II of the Social Security Act.

(e) Collection of past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligations.

(1) In general.

Upon receiving notice from any State that a named person owes a past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligation to such State, the Secretary shall, under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Secretary-

(A) reduce the amount of any overpayment payable to such person by the amount of such State income tax obligation;

(B) pay the amount by which such overpayment is reduced under subparagraph (A) to such State and notify such State of such person's name, taxpayer identification number, address, and the amount collected; and

(C) notify the person making such overpayment that the overpayment has been reduced by an amount necessary to satisfy a past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligation.

If an offset is made pursuant to a joint return, the notice under subparagraph (B) shall include the names, taxpayer identification numbers, and addresses of each person filing such return.

(2) Offset permitted only against residents of State seeking offset.

Paragraph (1) shall apply to an overpayment by any person for a taxable year only if the address shown on the Federal return for such taxable year of the overpayment is an address within the State seeking the offset.

(3) Priorities for offset.

Any overpayment by a person shall be reduced pursuant to this subsection -

(A) after such overpayment is reduced pursuant to-

(i) subsection (a) with respect to any liability for any internal revenue tax on the part of the person who made the overpayment;

(ii) subsection (c) with respect to past-due support; and

(iii) subsection (d) with respect to any past-due, legally enforceable debt owed to a Federal agency; and

(B) before such overpayment is credited to the future liability for any Federal internal revenue tax of such person pursuant to subsection (b) .

If the Secretary receives notice from one or more agencies of the State of more than one debt subject to paragraph (1) or subsection (f) that is owed by such person to such an agency, any overpayment by such person shall be applied against such debts in the order in which such debts accrued.

(4) Notice; consideration of evidence.

No State may take action under this subsection until such State-

(A) notifies by certified mail with return receipt the person owing the past-due State income tax liability that the State proposes to take action pursuant to this section ;

(B) gives such person at least 60 days to present evidence that all or part of such liability is not past-due or not legally enforceable;

(C) considers any evidence presented by such person and determines that an amount of such debt is past-due and legally enforceable; and

(D) satisfies such other conditions as the Secretary may prescribe to ensure that the determination made under subparagraph (C) is valid and that the State has made reasonable efforts to obtain payment of such State income tax obligation.

(5) Past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligation.

For purposes of this subsection , the term "past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligation" means a debt-

(A)

(i) which resulted from-

(I) a judgment rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction which has determined an amount of State income tax to be due; or

(II) a determination after an administrative hearing which has determined an amount of State income tax to be due; and

(ii) which is no longer subject to judicial review; or

(B) which resulted from a State income tax which has been assessed but not collected, the time for redetermination of which has expired, and which has not been delinquent for more than 10 years.

For purposes of this paragraph , the term "State income tax" includes any local income tax administered by the chief tax administration agency of the State.

(6) Regulations.

The Secretary shall issue regulations prescribing the time and manner in which States must submit notices of past-due, legally enforceable State income tax obligations and the necessary information that must be contained in or accompany such notices. The regulations shall specify the types of State income taxes and the minimum amount of debt to which the reduction procedure established by paragraph (1) may be applied. The regulations may require States to pay a fee to reimburse the Secretary for the cost of applying such procedure. Any fee paid to the Secretary pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be used to reimburse appropriations which bore all or part of the cost of applying such procedure.

(7) Erroneous payment to State.

Any State receiving notice from the Secretary that an erroneous payment has been made to such State under paragraph (1) shall pay promptly to the Secretary, in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, an amount equal to the amount of such

erroneous payment (without regard to whether any other amounts payable to such State under such paragraph have been paid to such State).

(f) Collection of unemployment compensation debts.

(1) In general.

Upon receiving notice from any State that a named person owes a covered unemployment compensation debt to such State, the Secretary shall, under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Secretary-

(A) reduce the amount of any overpayment payable to such person by the amount of such covered unemployment compensation debt;

(B) pay the amount by which such overpayment is reduced under subparagraph (A) to such State and notify such State of such person's name, taxpayer identification number, address, and the amount collected; and

(C) notify the person making such overpayment that the overpayment has been reduced by an amount necessary to satisfy a covered unemployment compensation debt.

If an offset is made pursuant to a joint return, the notice under subparagraph (C) shall include information related to the rights of a spouse of a person subject to such an offset.

(2) Priorities for offset.

Any overpayment by a person shall be reduced pursuant to this subsection-

(A) after such overpayment is reduced pursuant to-

(i) subsection (a) with respect to any liability for any internal revenue tax on the part of the person who made the overpayment;

(ii) subsection (c) with respect to past-due support; and

(iii) subsection (d) with respect to any past-due, legally enforceable debt owed to a Federal agency; and

(B) before such overpayment is credited to the future liability for any Federal internal revenue tax of such person pursuant to subsection (b) .

If the Secretary receives notice from a State or States of more than one debt subject to paragraph (1) or subsection (e) that is owed by a person to such State or States, any overpayment by such person shall be applied against such debts in the order in which such debts accrued.

(3) Notice; consideration of evidence.

No State may take action under this subsection until such State-

(A) notifies the person owing the covered unemployment compensation debt that the State proposes to take action pursuant to this section ;

(B) provides such person at least 60 days to present evidence that all or part of such liability is not legally enforceable or is not a covered unemployment compensation debt;

(C) considers any evidence presented by such person and determines that an amount of such debt is legally enforceable and is a covered unemployment compensation debt; and

(D) satisfies such other conditions as the Secretary may prescribe to ensure that the determination made under subparagraph (C) is valid and that the State has made reasonable efforts to obtain payment of such covered unemployment compensation debt.

(4) Covered unemployment compensation debt.

For purposes of this subsection , the term "covered unemployment compensation debt" means-

(A) a past-due debt for erroneous payment of unemployment compensation due to fraud or the person's failure to report earnings which has become final under the law of a State certified by the Secretary of Labor pursuant to section 3304 and which remains uncollected;

(B) contributions due to the unemployment fund of a State for which the State has determined the person to be liable and which remain uncollected; and

(C) any penalties and interest assessed on such debt.

(5) Regulations.

(A) In general. The Secretary may issue regulations prescribing the time and manner in which States must submit notices of covered unemployment compensation debt and the necessary information that must be contained in or accompany such notices. The regulations may specify the minimum amount of debt to which the reduction procedure established by paragraph (1) may be applied.

(B) Fee payable to secretary. The regulations may require States to pay a fee to the Secretary, which may be deducted from amounts collected, to reimburse the Secretary for the cost of applying such procedure. Any fee paid to the Secretary pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be used to reimburse appropriations which bore all or part of the cost of applying such procedure.

(C) Submission of notices through secretary of labor- The regulations may include a requirement that States submit notices of covered unemployment compensation debt to the Secretary via the Secretary of Labor in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary of Labor. Such procedures may require States to pay a fee to the Secretary of Labor to reimburse the Secretary of Labor for the costs of applying this subsection . Any such fee shall be established in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury. Any fee paid to the Secretary of Labor may be deducted from amounts collected and shall be used to reimburse the appropriation account which bore all or part of the cost of applying this subsection .

(6) Erroneous payment to state.

Any State receiving notice from the Secretary that an erroneous payment has been made to such State under paragraph (1) shall pay promptly to the Secretary, in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, an amount equal to the amount of such erroneous payment (without regard to whether any other amounts payable to such State under such paragraph have been paid to such State).

(g) Review of reductions.

No court of the United States shall have jurisdiction to hear any action, whether legal or equitable, brought to restrain or review a reduction authorized by subsection (c) , (d) , (e) , or (f) . No such reduction shall be subject to review by the Secretary in an administrative proceeding. No action brought against the United States to recover the amount of any such reduction shall be considered to be a suit for refund of tax. This subsection does not preclude any legal equitable, or administrative action against the Federal agency or State to which the amount of such reduction was paid or any such action against the Commissioner of Social Security which is otherwise available with respect to recoveries of overpayments of benefits under section 204 of the Social Security Act.

(h) Federal agency.

For purposes of this section , the term "Federal agency" means a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States, and includes a Government corporation (as such term is defined in section 103 of title 5, United States Code).

(i) Treatment of payments to States.

The Secretary may provide that, for purposes of determining interest, the payment of any amount withheld under subsection (c) , (e) , or (f) to a State shall be treated as a payment to the person or persons making the overpayment.

(j) Cross reference.

For procedures relating to agency notification of the Secretary, see section 3721 of title 31, United States Code .

(k) Refunds to certain fiduciaries of insolvent members of affiliated groups.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of an insolvent corporation which is a member of an affiliated group of corporations filing a consolidated return for any taxable year and which is subject to a statutory or court-appointed fiduciary, the Secretary may by regulation provide that any refund for such taxable year may be paid on behalf of such insolvent corporation to such fiduciary to the extent that the Secretary determines that the refund is attributable to losses or credits of such insolvent corporation.

(l) Explanation of reason for refund disallowance.

In the case of a disallowance of a claim for refund, the Secretary shall provide the taxpayer with an explanation for such disallowance.

(m) Earliest date for certain refunds.

No credit or refund of an overpayment for a taxable year shall be made to a taxpayer before the 15th day of the second month following the close of such taxable year if a credit is allowed to such taxpayer under section 24 (by reason of subsection (d) thereof) or 32 for such taxable year.

(n) Misdirected direct deposit refund.

Not later than the date which is 6 months after the date of the enactment of the Taxpayer First Act, the Secretary shall prescribe regulations to establish procedures to allow for-

- (1) taxpayers to report instances in which a refund made by the Secretary by electronic funds transfer was not transferred to the account of the taxpayer;
- (2) coordination with financial institutions for the purpose of-
 - (A) identifying the accounts to which transfers described in paragraph (1) were made; and
 - (B) recovery of the amounts so transferred; and
- (3) the refund to be delivered to the correct account of the taxpayer.