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Hatch Statement at Finance Hearing on Tax Schemes and Scams

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) today delivered the following opening statement at a committee hearing on tax schemes and scams:

The committee will come to order.

The committee meets today to hear about growing criminal activity that is targeting taxpayers across the country. These criminal acts are perpetrated by thieves hiding behind telephone lines and computers, preying on honest taxpayers and robbing the Treasury of tens of billions of dollars every year.

This must stop, and we are here today to hear from some of the federal and state officials on the front lines of the fight to catch these crooks and protect taxpayers.

But first I want to talk about one case in particular, and one very large number. In this town – and especially right here on this committee – we often talk in hundreds of millions, billions, or even trillions of dollars. Some joke about a number being referred to as budget dust, even if the number has nine or ten zeros behind it.

But let me tell you about a number that is truly stunning: \$15,800.

That's \$15,800 saved through hard work, sacrifice, and honest living.

That's \$15,800 saved for the down payment of a new house for a growing family.

And, that's \$15,800 in savings that was wiped away by criminals who use fear, confusion, and intimidation as their weapons.

This is the story of the Degen family from Taylorsville, Utah, and I would like to play a news clip from KTVX, a Utah ABC affiliate, that tells their story.

This is just one family, out of millions that have been targeted and thousands that have been victimized. And this is just one scam.

But, make no mistake, taxpayers across the country are also facing identity theft in record numbers, account takeovers, and other criminal attacks.

Once again, this must be stopped.

Taxpayers must be more aware of the risks and better protected from attack. And these criminals must be found and brought to justice. I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses on today's panel and to hearing more about how we can accomplish these goals. I'll now turn it over to Senator Wyden for his opening statement.

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