

For Immediate Release
April 7, 2009

Contact: NR 32-09-G
Anita Gore
916-327-8988

State Board of Equalization Wins Taxpayer Service and Education Award

The California State Board of Equalization (BOE) announced today that the BOE has won the Federation of Tax Administrators' 2009 Leon Rothenberg Award for Taxpayer Service and Education.

The Federation of Tax Administrators (FTA) honored the BOE for its innovative Tax Appeals Assistance Program that provides free legal assistance to qualifying taxpayers. The FTA also honored the State of Washington for its streamlined tax education initiative. The FTA is scheduled to present the award at their Annual Meeting on June 1, 2009 in Denver, Colorado.

The BOE's Tax Appeals Assistance Program was created in 2006 within the Taxpayers' Rights Advocate Office to offer free legal assistance to qualifying taxpayers that are appealing decisions of the Franchise Tax Board, including denials of applications for Homeowner and Renter Property Tax Assistance and income tax disputes of less than \$20,000, if the dispute relates to penalties, federal actions, "California method," interest abatement, statutes of limitations, and head of household issues.

Under the direction of senior BOE tax counsel, more than 30 qualified law students from five law schools in California provide support to taxpayers through the Tax Appeals Assistance Program. The program has assisted taxpayers with more than 380 appeals and successfully resolved more than 160 appeals without a formal Board of Equalization hearing because the taxpayer prevailed or agreed with the Franchise Tax Board's decision.

The Tax Appeals Assistance Program's participating law schools include the University of San Diego School of Law in San Diego, the Loyola University Law School in Los Angeles, the Chapman University School of Law in Orange, the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, and the Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco.

The BOE serves as the administrative appellate body for the tax and fee programs it administers. Its appellate duties also include review of final actions of the Franchise Tax Board involving the state's Bank and Corporation Franchise Tax, Personal Income Tax, and the Homeowner and Renter Property Tax Assistance Program. For more information on the Taxpayers' Rights Advocate Office and the Tax Appeals Assistance Program, visit the BOE website: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra/tra.htm>.

The FTA, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D. C., is comprised of all 50 states' tax and revenue departments, as well as the District of Columbia and New York City. The Leon Rothenberg Award, named for the long-time FTA Executive Director, honors state revenue departments for outstanding programs in taxpayer service and education. The 2006 Leon Rothenberg Award was won by the Franchise Tax Board's ReadyReturn program.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes.

###