Perspective

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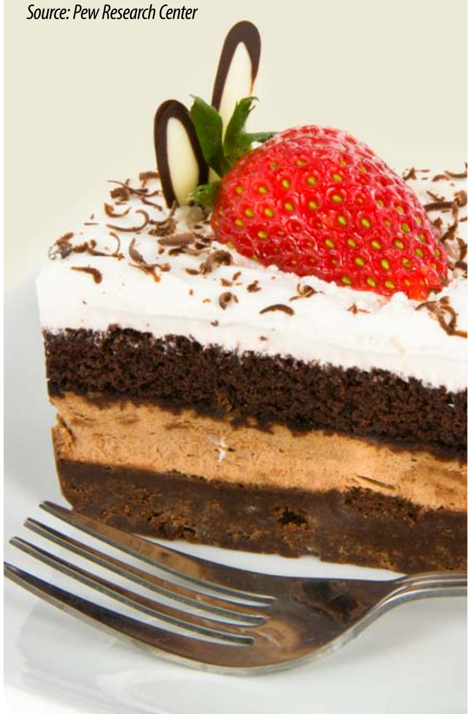
Did You Get Your Share?

The U.S. tax code allowed for more than $1.3 trillion worth of tax breaks during fiscal 2015, including:

1. Lower rates on dividends and capital gains.
2. Mortgage interest deductions.
3. Earned-income tax credit.
4. Contributions to retirement plans.
5. Earnings on tax-deferred and tax-free retirement accounts.

Source: Pew Research Center



There is Still Time to Reduce Your Tax Bill

One-in-three Americans like doing taxes! The reason?[1] Tax refunds.

Whether you like it or not, there still may be time to reduce the amount you'll pay. Until April 15, 2016, taxpayers can make tax-deductible contributions for 2015 to:

- **Health Savings Accounts** (HSAs). To qualify for an HSA, you must:
  - Be covered by a high deductible health plan.
  - Have no other health coverage.
  - Not be enrolled in Medicare.

  With an HSA, you can make tax-deductible contributions of up to $3,350 for an individual or $6,650 for a family each year. If you're age 55 or older, you can contribute even more.[2] HSA assets do not have to be used during the year in which they were set aside. Unspent savings remain in the account and any earnings grow tax-deferred. No matter when the money is spent, it is tax-free as long as it is used for qualifying medical expenses.[3]

- **Individual Retirement Accounts** (IRAs). You may be able to make tax-deductible contributions to Traditional IRAs, although the amount of the deduction may be limited if you participate in a retirement plan at work and your income is more than $61,000 (filing singly) or $98,000 (filing jointly).[4,5] The maximum IRA contribution for 2015 is $5,500. You can make catch-up contributions if you are age 50 or older.[6]

Talk with your financial representative or tax professional. They can help you better understand how HSAs and IRAs may affect your taxes and retirement plans. ■

None of the information in this document should be considered as tax advice. You should consult your tax advisor for information concerning your individual situation.

1 Motel, Seth. *5 Facts on how Americans view taxes*. Pew Research. April 10, 2015.
2 Miller, Stephen. *IRS Issues 2016 HSA Contribution Limits.* Society for Human Resource Management. May 8, 2015.
3 Guina, Ryan. *How to Use a Health Savings Account for Retirement.* U.S. News & World Report. September 10, 2015.
4 IRS.gov. *Retirement Topics – IRA Contribution Limits.* December 23, 2015.
5 IRS.gov. *IRA Deduction Limits - Effect of Modified AGI on Deduction if You Are Covered by a Retirement Plan at Work.* December 17, 2015.
6 IRS.gov. *Retirement Topics.*

A Credit Monitoring Checklist

Technology has revolutionized communications, but it also has made our personal information more vulnerable. There have been 93 data breaches in 2016, putting more than 1.5 million records at risk. Breaches occur when records are illegally accessed, exposing Social Security numbers, financial data and more.[7,8]

Here are steps to help protect your personal information.

☐ **Review bank and credit card statements** for unauthorized transactions every month. If you find an unauthorized charge, notify the bank or card provider immediately. Make sure you have chip-enabled credit and debit cards.

☐ **Monitor your credit report through the credit bureaus.** You can request a free credit report from each bureau (Experian, Transunion, and Equifax) every 12 months. This allows you to check three times a year.[9] Examine the report carefully. If you do not recognize an account or inquiry, contact the credit bureau immediately to address the issue.

☐ **Use a credit monitoring service.** These services will monitor your credit and let you know when a red flag is raised, such as a new inquiry, a new account, or a phone number or address change.

If you discover your personal information has been compromised, you may want to take additional steps, such as adding layers of password protection to bank and other accounts. Talk with your financial representative about how to protect your identity. ■

Four Steps That Can Lower Risk of Identity Theft

1. **Use strong passwords** with at least eight characters, including numbers, letters, and symbols. Change them often.
2. **Keep personal identification private.** Don't carry anything unnecessary in your wallet. Keep your Social Security card in a secure place.
3. **Install a wiping program on your smartphone.** If your phone is stolen or lost, you will be able to erase all personal data.
4. **Opt out of pre-approved credit offers.** The Federal Trade Commission suggests calling 1-888-567-8688 or visiting optoutprescreen.com.[10]

[7] ITRC Data Breach Report.
[8] Identity Theft Resource Center, *2016 Data Breach Category Summary*, February 23, 2016.
[9] USA.gov. *Credit Reports and Scores*. February 25, 2016.
[10] www.consumer.FTC.gov. *Prescreened Credit and Insurance Offers*. March 2011.

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