

**GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE TALKING POINTS -- DRAFT**  
**STATE FREE FILE AGREEMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**HOSTED BY GOVERNOR MUSGROVE ON MARCH 14, 2003**

- Thank you all for joining us this morning. I am pleased to have you here with me today as I make two important announcements that will benefit thousands of Mississippi taxpayers.
- First, I'd like to make all Mississippi taxpayers aware of a new public-private partnership called the Free File Alliance which provides free online tax preparation and e-filing services for federal tax returns to over 78 million qualified Americans including lower and moderate income taxpayers; those who qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit; seniors; students; and active duty military personnel.

- Second, I am announcing today that my Administration has just spearheaded the creation of a **state** free file agreement. It is based on the federal Free File Alliance model only it provides qualifying Mississippi taxpayers a choice among free tax prep and e-filing products for their state returns. These new public-private partnerships are a tremendous public service.

**Deleted:** <#>This innovative public-private partnership between the IRS and 17 leading private electronic tax preparation companies represents a new model of collaboration between the public and private sectors, and is a great leap forward in the realm of government services delivery.¶

**Deleted:** . the ability to also prepare and file their state tax forms online at no cost using Internet-based software from the world's leading tax preparation companies.¶

- They harness the power of the Internet to help millions of Americans file their taxes for free, with virtually no cost to the federal, state or city governments.
- They give hard-working Mississippi residents a choice among tax preparation products and, by filing their tax returns electronically, they help them receive their tax refund in as little as 10 days.

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- They are secure. Eligible taxpayers complete their tax returns using the websites of private companies employing the latest security technology to protect your privacy. Only final tax returns are transmitted to the government, and companies that participate in our agreement must comply with all applicable federal and state laws protecting taxpayer information.

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- They will help to dramatically increase the amount of people who file their state taxes electronically, saving all of us money.

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- In these challenging times, when we are faced with hefty deficits at the federal, state and local levels, public-private partnerships like the state and federal free file agreements that I am announcing here today have the power and potential to save significant taxpayer dollars while improving the delivery and quality of government services.

- In short, these agreements make one of the least enjoyable tasks on this earth – paying taxes – a lot less challenging and a lot more productive for thousands of Mississippi residents.

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- Thank you all for joining us, and I would like to personally thank our partner companies like Intuit and all the community-based organizations represented here today as well.