



PRESS RELEASE

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**SILVER CITY MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR STOLEN
IDENTITY REFUND FRAUD**

ALBUQUERQUE – Douglas Kuester, 43, a tax preparer from Silver City, N.M., was sentenced today to 48 months in prison for filing false claims and aggravated identity theft, the Justice Department and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced today. Kuester was also ordered to pay \$911,000 in restitution and will be on supervised release for three years after completing his prison sentence.

Kuester had pleaded guilty to the charges in May. He was originally indicted by a federal grand jury on Jan. 18, 2012, and has been in custody since his arrest on January 24.

According to court documents, Kuester used stolen identities to file false tax returns which fraudulently claimed refunds. He would direct the fraudulently obtained refunds to various bank accounts and prepaid debit cards, retaining portions of the proceeds for himself. Kuester also admitted to using an anonymizer to help conceal his filing of the false returns.

Kathryn Keneally, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Tax Division, and U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales commended special agents of IRS - Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case, and Tax Division Trial Attorneys Jason H. Poole and Gregory P. Bailey, who prosecuted the case with assistance from the New Mexico U.S. Attorney's Office.

Additional information about the Tax Division and its enforcement efforts may be found at www.justice.gov/tax.

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