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or even legal problems, the IRS said.

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*By Leada Gore, al.com (TNS)*

Bogus claims on social media are nothing new. But when it comes to taxes, misleading information on social media can lead to financial or even legal problems, the IRS warns.

Social media—things like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok—can be used to circulate “wildly inaccurate tax advice,” the agency said. Some claims involve urging people to

misuse common tax documents like Form W-2 or more obscure ones like form 8944,

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Danny Werfel

“Social media is an easy way for scammers and others to try encouraging people to pursue some really bad ideas, and that includes ways to magically increase your tax refund,” IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel said in a statement. “There are many ways to get good tax information, including @irsnews on social media and from trusted tax professionals. But people should be careful with who they’re following on social media for tax advice.

“Unlike hacks to fix a leaky kitchen sink or creative makeup tips, people shouldn’t rely on made-up ways on social media to patch up their tax return and boost their refund,” he added.

The IRS cited two bogus claims that are currently circulating on social media:

## Fraudulent advice on W-2s

This scheme encourages people to use tax software to manually fill out Form W-2, *Wage and Tax Statement*, and include false income information. In this W-2 scheme, scam artists suggest people make up large income and withholding figures, as well as the employer it’s coming from.

Scam artists then instruct people to file the bogus tax return electronically in hopes of getting a substantial refund—sometimes as much as five figures—due to the large amount of withholding.

There are two other variations of the W-2 scheme. Both involve misusing Form W-2 wage information in hopes of generating a larger refund:

- **Fraudulent Form 7202:** This scheme involves encouraging people to use [Form](#)

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companies and large employers—as well as the Social Security Administration—to verify W-2 information.

## Form 8944 scheme

Another example of bad advice circulating on social media involves [Form 8944, Preparer e-file Hardship Waiver Request](#). Wildly inaccurate claims made about this form include its use to receive a refund from the IRS, even if the taxpayer owes money.

While Form 8944 is a legitimate IRS tax form, it is only used by professional tax preparers who are requesting a waiver so they can file tax returns on paper instead of electronically. It is not a form the average taxpayer can use to avoid tax bills, the IRS said.

There are consequences for filing false or fraudulent tax returns, including civil penalties of as much as \$5,000 and criminal prosecution.

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