

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 13, 2003**

**TAX EXPERTS TO OFFER FREE TAX PREPARATION AND ADVICE AT ANNUAL NORTON TAX FAIR SATURDAY**

Washington, DC—Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) will sponsor her third annual Tax Preparation and Information Fair on Saturday, February 15, 2003, from 10 AM to 1 PM, at the Washington Convention Center, 9<sup>th</sup> and H Streets, N.W. More than 80 tax professionals from the IRS, and D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue will prepare forms **for D.C. residents only**, free of charge. Residents also will be able to get information on how they can qualify for valuable tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Norton's \$5,000 federal income tax credit for first time homebuyers, and her D.C.-only tax breaks for businesses. Service is first come, first served. About 700 people attended the fair last year.

"I initiated the Tax Fair not only as a vital service, but also to drive home the point to my constituents and to the public that D.C. residents are second per capita in federal income taxes but have no vote in Congress," Norton said. "Americans certainly don't like paying income taxes. Paying your taxes without getting a vote in return is impossible to justify. I hope that our free tax preparation service helps soften the blow, while strengthening the determination of residents to demand their full voting representation."

E-filing, which can result in refunds in 8 to 10 days, will be available at the Tax Fair. Norton cautioned that this is a far better alternative for taxpayers than using rapid refund, private tax preparers who charge high fees and interest.

There are no income limits to attend the fair. However taxpayers who have income from rental property, partnerships, small business corporations, estates and trusts, or stocks/bonds sales; or those who are self-employed, are urged to seek assistance from a reputable, paid tax preparer. Residents also should bring W-2's, Form 1099, and documentation such as dependents' social security cards to support deductions and credits.

"We can't do every tax return in the city for free, but there are many residents we can help who have difficulty preparing their returns or need to save their hard earned money, rather than pay a tax professional, especially when the economy remains in a decline," Norton said.

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