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Here’s the Tax Beat broadcast for November 5

Subject Line: When TikTok Becomes TaxTok

Buckle up, buttercups — it’s time to talk about the avalanche of advice flooding Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and beyond. You know the kind: "Just buy a short-term rental and *poof* — zero tax!" It’s catchy. It’s viral. And it’s mostly hype. Sure, short-term rentals can offer tax advantages, maybe even significant ones. But the idea that you can spend the next year assembling a portfolio of Airbnb's to magically eliminate your entire tax bill is mostly fairy tale with a fancy Instagram filter. That claim may be technically true, if you’re bad at math. In most cases, though, the numbers just don’t pencil out. And, of course, not *every* taxpayer is in the same boat, despite influencers’ attempts to reach the widest possible audience.

Then there’s the darker side—where promotors approach the fraud line and sometimes step entirely over it. "Move your business or appreciated asset into my exotic trust, and you’ll never pay again again." Yeah, that kind of pitch is flashing danger lights for those of us who speak tax-law for breakfast. Abusive trusts, phantom deductions, no real substance or disclosure—just hype dressed in slick graphics and shared by someone with speaker-gear and zero credentials. That stuff doesn’t just make your cheeks tighten—it makes your regulator radar blink.

Now there’s some news from across the Pacific. In China, the Cyberspace Administration of China – the country’s top internet regulator — has stepped in and said: "if you want to talk about professional subjects like finance, law, or education, you better have the credentials." And so, as of October 25, 2025, Chinese influencers discussing professional topics must hold formal degrees, certifications, or approved qualifications. In addition, the platforms that host them must verify credentials, label AI-generated content and ensure a higher bar of accountability. The message? If you play a professional online, you need to *be* a professional.

So why does this matter to you as a taxpayer in a country with a First Amendment? Because while this rule may apply only in China, the message is global: the era of "anyone can shout advice into a live-stream" is facing a reckoning. If China says you need credentials to opine on finance or tax-adjacent fields, it’s only a matter of time before other regulators ask: "And you? You do what, exactly?" Especially when one viral video by someone unqualified can wipe out a trust-fund family or send a business owner scrambling for penalties.

Here’s the kicker: when you see a flashy post promising "one weird trick that melts taxes away," the question isn’t just "Is this too good to be true?" It’s "Does the person *talking* even have the background to legitimately make this claim?" If the answer is "no" (or "don’t know"), then it’s more than hype—it’s potential liability.

Let’s finish with one idea: next time you spot something sketchy online—some "influencer" pitching tax relief like it’s a TikTok dance—send it our way. We’ll dissect it, evaluate the credentials (or lack thereof), parse the legal foundation, and decide if it’s clever planning or just clickbait dressed in a trust-tie. Because you deserve real substance, not just the loudest influencer voice. Stay sharp. Stay skeptical. And stay safe!

Kevin