



## OUT OF CONTROL

As automakers use more technology, software bugs follow.

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## CLIMATE COSTS

As natural disasters mount, Biden seeks to price out damage.

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## TAXMAN COMETH

If your life changed in 2021, watch for filing surprises.

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# BUSINESS

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Marie D. De Jesús / Staff photographer

Kathy Ploch, a certified public accountant and tax expert with the Houston firm of Durio & Korpala, has helped with filings for 38 tax seasons.

### FINANCES

## This tax season could be even more taxing

By Jim Magill  
CORRESPONDENT

This year, taxpayers will be confronted with a number of major changes to tax laws as they prepare their 2021 federal income tax returns. In the past two years, Congress passed tax legislation to address the impact of coronavirus pandemic on household finances and the broader economy, and the measures enacted could significantly affect the refunds that taxpayers receive, or the amount they owe.

Kathy Ploch, a certified public

From credits to deductions, major law changes are creating new challenges for taxpayers filing returns

accountant and tax expert with the Houston firm of Durio & Korpala, explained some of these changes and outlined what taxpayers should consider in preparing their 2021 returns. Ploch, who is in her 38th tax season as a tax preparer, became a certified public accountant in 1999. She has prepared all types of tax returns, including returns for individuals,

businesses, nonprofits, estates and trusts.

She is a former president of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants Houston Chapter (TX CPA Houston) and remains an active member of the society, serving on numerous boards and committees at the local state and national levels. For more than 20 years, Ploch has

donated her time to the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, an IRS-backed program dedicated to helping low-income people file their federal income tax returns.

**Q: What changes to the tax laws will have the biggest effect on 2021 returns?**

**A:** The biggest changes are some of the credits. The first one is the child tax credit. For 2021, it's increased from \$2,000 to \$3,600 for children under the age of 6 and \$3,000 for children under the age of

*Taxes continues on B7*

## Political games are driving up electricity prices for Texans

CHRIS TOMLINSON  
Commentary



The man in charge of the Texas grid during the 2021 blackouts has laid bare how Gov. Greg Abbott imposed

billions of dollars in unnecessary bills on consumers to protect his chances of getting re-elected, and Abbott is still driving up electricity prices.

On Abbott's orders, the Public Utility Commission of Texas is spending an untoward amount of consumer money in the name of resiliency but boosting corporate profits instead. These political shenanigans, at taxpayer expense, prove why we must remove politics from energy

regulation.

Texas voters — usually in the Republican primary now underway — elect the governor who appoints cronies to the Public Utility Commission. The PUC then oversees the executives who run the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas, a nonprofit that acts as an air traffic controller for the grid.

Abbott appointed his former policy adviser and Republican

*Tomlinson continues on B6*



Power generation in Texas has largely become about who is in power — at the expense of consumers.

Jason Fochtman / Staff photographer

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