



PRESS RELEASE

**Attorney General Gansler Secures Settlement from Snapchat, Inc.
*Mobile app developer can no longer deceive consumers by claiming its photo and
video messages "disappear forever"*
*Snapchat also alleged to have collected personal information from children
under age 13 without parental consent, in violation of federal law***

Baltimore, MD (June 12, 2014) - Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler announced today that he has secured a settlement from Snapchat, Inc., over alleged deceptive trade practices and violations of federal laws intended to protect children's privacy online. The mobile application by the same name, which is popular among teens and pre-teens, is used on smartphones, tablet computers and other mobile devices to send photograph and video messages called "snaps."

"Despite Snapchat's marketing claims to the contrary, no company can fully prevent content you send to someone else from being copied, shared or posted online," said Attorney General Gansler. "Companies that operate on the Internet or on mobile devices, especially those popular among youth, have a responsibility to protect their users' privacy and to be up front about what personal information they collect and the permanency of uploaded files."

According to Attorney General Gansler, Snapchat misled consumers when it represented that snaps are only temporary and will disappear after they are opened and viewed by the recipient. In fact, recipients of snaps can capture or copy them for later viewing and distribution. Consequently, consumers may have sent sensitive snaps that they intended not to be saved or seen by anyone but the recipient, only to discover that they were saved or distributed to others.

Attorney General Gansler further alleged that Snapchat collected and maintained the names and phone numbers from consumers' electronic contact lists. This was a practice that Snapchat has not always disclosed to consumers and to which consumers did not always consent. Lastly, the Attorney General alleged that Snapchat, although aware some of its users were under the age of 13, failed to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") and corresponding COPPA Rule, which prohibit operators of online services from knowingly collecting personal information from children without verifiable parental consent.

Without accepting liability, Snapchat agreed to injunctive relief that addresses each of Attorney General's concerns, including the following:

- Snapchat has agreed not to make false representations or material omissions in connection with its offer and sale of the Snapchat app.

- Snapchat is specifically enjoined from misrepresenting the temporary nature of snaps and must disclose to users that the recipients of snaps have the ability to capture or copy the photo and video messages they receive.
- Snapchat has agreed to comply with COPPA and, for a period of 10 years, will take specific steps to ensure children under the age of 13 are not creating Snapchat accounts.
- Snapchat must obtain affirmative consent from consumers before it collects and saves any contact information from consumers' electronic address books.

The settlement also requires Snapchat to make a \$100,000 payment to the State.