



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contacts:
press@oag.state.md.us
410-576-7009

Attorney General Brown Joins Bipartisan Coalition Calling on Meta to Protect Users' Accounts from Scammers

Coalition of 41 Attorneys General Ask for Data Security Review Following Major Increases in Scammers Taking Over Facebook Accounts

BALTIMORE, MD (March 7, 2024) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown joined a bipartisan coalition of 41 Attorneys General in sending a [letter to Meta Platforms, Inc.](#) (Meta) addressing the recent increase in Facebook and Instagram platform account takeovers by scammers. Account takeovers are when bad actors break into a user's account and change passwords, effectively hijacking the account and blocking out the rightful owner. Attorney General Brown and the bipartisan coalition are calling on Meta to thoroughly review its data security practices for protecting its users' accounts from being unfairly locked out or taken over by scammers and to do more to assist consumers whose accounts are taken over.

“Social media platforms profit from user data, yet fail to prioritize user safety and protections,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “This coalition demands Meta improve its security measures to prevent scammers from hijacking accounts, exploiting user data and information. Meta must increase resources that help users regain control of their accounts.”

Once scammers hijack a Facebook or Instagram user's account and change the password, they can steal personal information, read private messages, pose as the user to scam contacts, and even post publicly as the rightful user. All these actions cause undue harm and stress to account owners and their connections. While account takeovers are not new, there has been a dramatic increase in these schemes over the past year. As users have struggled to receive help from Meta, they have turned to their Attorneys General seeking assistance and support. Attorney General Brown's Consumer Protection Division has received over 300 complaints within the last year that consumers have been unjustly locked out of their Facebook or Instagram accounts.

To address the account takeover crisis and provide better quality services to the millions of users who rely on Meta platforms daily, the letter from the coalition outlines a series of commonsense steps Meta should take. These include the need to increase staffing to respond to account takeover complaints and greater investment in reducing account takeovers. The coalition also calls on Meta to adopt new procedures for users to protect themselves from account takeovers

including multi-step authentication measures. Additionally, the coalition urges Meta to take this issue more seriously and take stronger actions against scammers.

Users who experience an account takeover from a scammer or bad actors are encouraged to raise this concern to Meta immediately. Users unable to get in touch with Meta or have the issue resolved can refer to the [Facebook page with information](#) on how to address an account takeover situation. Maryland residents who experience an account takeover may file a general complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division online at www.MarylandAttorneyGeneral.gov.

In issuing today's letter, Attorney General Brown joins the Attorneys General of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

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