



ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN

ATTORNEY GENERAL: FACEBOOK HAS MADE 'SIGNIFICANT CHANGES' IN RESPONSE TO CONCERNS

For Immediate Release

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HARTFORD – Attorney General George Jepsen credited Facebook Tuesday for making it easier for users of its social media website to report imposter profiles and for providing instructions to users who wish to opt out of its new “Tag Suggestions” feature.

The company worked with attorneys in Jepsen’s office to address the privacy concerns and other issues the Attorney General raised in letters last month and in February.

“Facebook has made significant changes that will provide better service and greater privacy protection to its users, not only in Connecticut, but across the country,” Jepsen said. “The company has been cooperative and diligent in its response and I look forward to working with them in the future to make sure Facebook users’ privacy is protected, which I believe is our shared goal.”

Last month, Jepsen expressed concern that consumer privacy was being compromised by Facebook’s “Tag Suggestions” feature -- which uses facial recognition software to make photo-tagging easier for its users -- because users were not given adequate notice of the feature or the ability and instructions to disable it easily.

In response, the company has developed on-line Tag Suggest ads, which link users to their privacy settings and allow them to opt out if they choose. One round of ads ran earlier this month, resulting in more than 400 million Facebook impressions on U.S. Facebook users’ home pages. The second, which begins today, will cycle on those home pages for the next two weeks. The company anticipates that every Facebook user in the U.S. will see the new ad at least twice during this period.

“For any users who opt out, any facial recognition data collected will be deleted,” Jepsen said. The company also assured Jepsen that it was not using the information for commercial or marketing purposes and that the biometric data was secured and could not be used by private individuals to gain access to other user information.

Facebook also added new language and links to one of its user contact forms and automatic email response to help direct users to the correct reporting mechanism when trying to report an imposter or fake profile.

Jepsen raised this issue in February after Rep. Kim Rose, D-Milford, complained about the difficulty she had trying to contact Facebook and get it to shut down an imposter profile of her that was fraudulently soliciting money. The changes made to the contact form, and automatic

response should ensure that Facebook users who initially go down the wrong path to report an imposter account do not continue down that mistaken route.

Facebook's response to similar complaints of impersonation was to create a "roadblock" system, which it began using recently. After an account is reported as fake, the company puts up a "roadblock," which keeps the account from being used until it is verified as authentic, using telephone numbers or other information.

Additionally, in response to Jepsen's concerns, Facebook has improved how quickly it is able to respond to reports of fake or imposter accounts. Recently, Facebook was able to shut down within an hour, a second imposter account Rep. Rose discovered and reported.

"After hearing of the fraud perpetrated against me, many concerned individuals e-mailed my office. I am very pleased with the prompt attention from the Attorney General's office and appreciate all the time and effort in resolving and improving online security," Rep. Rose said. "Although this measure won't totally stop fraudulent pages from being created, it will have a significant impact on reducing the amount of time they are active. I applaud Facebook for working with us on this pervasive problem and it is my hope they continue to improve security and reporting for the benefit of the public."

Facebook initiated other changes to this process as well. A specific link has been activated on the website's "report abuse" prompt for complaints that a profile is "impersonating someone or is fake." Also, "impersonation" has been added to the drop-down menu to report "bullying or harassing" complaints.

Assistant Attorneys General Matthew Fitzsimmons represented Jepsen in this matter.

[Instructions](#) on how to navigate Facebook pages to enhance privacy and report fake profiles.

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