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ATTORNEYS GENERAL ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT WITH FACEBOOK TO MAKE SITE SAFER FOR UNDERAGE USERS

123 Illinois Sex Offenders from MySpace Discovered on Facebook

Chicago - Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced today that Facebook has agreed to make key changes to its social networking site that will better protect children from predators and inappropriate content. Madigan joined the attorneys general of 49 other states and the District of Columbia in the agreement resulting in actions by Facebook similar to those MySpace agreed to in January 2008.

Since 2006, Madigan has actively worked with a group of state attorneys general seeking to make social networking Web sites safer. Following the discovery of more than 1,800 Illinois sex offenders on MySpace, a Madigan subpoena to Facebook discovered 123 of those MySpace Illinois sex offenders had created profiles on Facebook, as well. Facebook has since removed those profiles.

“As with MySpace, I am concerned that young people communicating through Facebook run into risks of having contact with sexual predators roaming the Internet looking to meet children, teens and others,” said Madigan. “Many Facebook users are children who are simply too trusting and sometimes too free with the information they make available on their Facebook pages.

As part of the agreement announced today, Facebook will:

- Provide automatic safety messages when a child is in danger of giving personal information to an unknown adult,
- Restrict the ability of users to change their listed ages,
- Act more aggressively to remove inappropriate content and groups from the site, and
- Require third party vendors to adhere to Facebook’s safety and privacy guidelines.

Facebook also has agreed to maintain a list of pornographic Web sites and regularly cut any links to such sites. The company will remove groups for incest, pedophilia, cyberbullying and other violations of the site’s terms of services, as well as expel from the site individual violators of those terms. The social network site also has agreed to more prominently display safety tips to its users, require users under age 18 to affirm they have read Facebook’s safety tips when they register and regularly review models for abuse reporting.

Today's agreement with Facebook includes a Joint Statement on Key Principles of Social Networking Sites Safety developed by the attorneys general similar to those agreed to by MySpace. The principles fall into four categories:

- Creating an Online Safety Task Force
- Developing Design and Functionality Changes to Protect Children on Facebook
- Developing Education Materials and Tools for Parents, Educators and Children
- Cooperating with Law Enforcement

Madigan's participation in the Facebook and MySpace agreements are the latest steps in her continued legislative, law enforcement and policy efforts to protect young people from online predators.

As part of her law enforcement efforts, the Attorney General has served 11 subpoenas on MySpace to obtain the names and other identifying information of convicted sex offenders with profiles online. The information has been useful in the enforcement of parole and probation conditions prohibiting offenders from accessing the Internet or contacting minors. To date, the subpoenas have revealed 2,644 profiles belonging to 1,812 sex offenders in Illinois. A full report on the results of the MySpace subpoenas is available at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

Madigan initiated Operation "We C U" to investigate the dissemination of computer videos containing pornographic images of children ranging in age from infants to teens. To date, the investigation, which includes issuing and executing search warrants, has resulted in the arrest of three individuals currently awaiting prosecution.

Additionally, as a result of 2007 legislation that Madigan drafted, a new Illinois Cyber Crimes Location Database will begin on June 1 collecting and storing IP addresses from sex offenders upon registration. This database will be used to help investigate online child exploitation crimes.

Madigan also drafted the Internet Safety Education Act, which became law in 2007 and encourages Illinois schools to adopt an age-appropriate Internet safety curriculum for students in grades K through 12.

Last year, she developed a back-to-school safety initiative to provide key principles for Internet safety to Illinois schools to reinforce the fundamentals of Internet safety; and partnered with the Illinois State Alliance of YMCAs to expand the reach of Internet safety education to Y programs around the state.

Along with these initiatives, the Attorney General's office, through a grant from the Department of Justice, operates the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), one of 59 task forces across the nation designed to investigate child exploitation crimes and to provide Internet safety education. In 2007, the Illinois ICAC task force provided Internet safety training and education to more than 20,000 parents, children and professionals including initiating new training tools for law enforcement officials focusing on the potential problems caused by emerging social networking Web sites aimed at very young children, such as Club Penguin and Webkinz, as well as a training program for junior high and high school personnel to combat

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cyberbullying. The Illinois ICAC also responded to more than 579 cyber tips received from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

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