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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL INVESTIGATES INSTAGRAM'S IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Raoul, Coalition Concerned for Safety and Well-Being of Children; Examining Potential Violations of Consumer Protection Laws

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined a bipartisan nationwide investigation into Meta Platforms Inc., formerly known as Facebook, for providing and promoting its social media platform – Instagram – to children and young adults despite knowing that such use is associated with physical and mental health harms. Raoul and attorneys general across the country are examining whether the company violated state consumer protection laws and put the public at risk.

“Social media platforms rely on algorithms and other design features that can amplify issues like cyberbullying, low self-esteem and distorted perceptions about body image. Companies have a responsibility to protect young users from resulting physical and mental health harms,” Raoul said. “This investigation seeks to ensure that Meta, through its Instagram platform, is not putting young people at risk and violating their privacy rights.”

The investigation targets, among other things, the techniques utilized by Meta to increase the frequency and duration of engagement by young users and the resulting harms caused by such extended engagement. Today’s announcement follows recent reports revealing that Meta’s own internal research shows that using Instagram is associated with increased risks of physical and mental health harms of young people, including depression, eating disorders, and even suicide.

This investigation is part of Attorney General Raoul’s ongoing efforts to protect children online and address the negative impacts of social media platforms on young Illinois residents. In May, Raoul joined a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general urging Facebook to abandon its plans to launch a version of Instagram for children under the age of 13.

Leading the investigation, involving Illinois and a broad group of states across the country, is a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee and Vermont.