



Herbert H. Slatery III Attorney General & Reporter

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 10, 2021
#21-18

CONTACT: Samantha Fisher
615.741.5860
Samantha.fisher@ag.tn.gov

AG SLATERY LEADS COALITION URGING FACEBOOK TO ABANDON LAUNCH OF INSTAGRAM KIDS

Coalition Sends Letter Expressing Serious Concerns Over Safety and Well-Being of Children

Nashville- Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III is leading a coalition of 44 attorneys general urging Facebook to abandon its plans to launch a version of Instagram for children under the age of 13.

“Facebook has a record of failing to protect the safety and privacy of children,” said General Slatery. “Let’s not take their word for it that this time- and with a product specifically created for children- is going to be any different.”

In their letter to CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the attorneys general express various concerns over Facebook’s proposal, including research that social media can be harmful to the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of children; rapidly worsening concerns about cyberbullying on Instagram; use of the platform by predators to target children; Facebook’s checkered record in protecting the welfare of children on its platforms; and children’s lack of capacity to navigate the complexities of what they encounter online, including advertising, inappropriate content, and relationships with strangers.

At a Congressional hearing in March, Zuckerberg dismissed the idea that social media is harmful to children, despite strong data and research that has shown a link between young people’s use of social media and an increase in mental distress, self-injurious behavior, and suicidality. Instagram has been frequently flagged for increasing suicidal ideation, depression, and body image concerns in children.

The attorneys general also cast doubt on Facebook’s ability to protect children on their proposed Instagram platform and comply with relevant privacy laws such as the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). They point out that the company has a record of failing to protect the safety and privacy of children. For instance, Facebook’s Messenger Kids app contained a glitch that allowed children to circumvent restrictions and join group chats with strangers.

To read the letter, click here:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2021/pr21-18-letter.pdf>

Co-leading today’s letter are the attorneys general of Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Vermont, and the letter is joined by the attorneys general of Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

###

