NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Mike Hilgers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Attorney General Hilgers Announces Largest Big Tech Settlement in History

Meta to Pay Up to $17 Billion and Implement Sweeping Child-Safety Reforms on Instagram and Facebook

Lincoln - Today, Attorney General Hilgers announced a landmark $17.1 billion multistate settlement with Meta Platforms, Inc. This is the largest state consumer protection settlement in history outside the Big Tobacco settlements of the 1990s. In addition to the payment, Meta must implement a sweeping set of safety features designed to protect children on Instagram and Facebook. The agreement resolves claims by 47 States and D.C., Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands that the company designed Instagram with addictive features, knowingly exposed young users to serious mental harms, and intentionally misled the public about the safety of its platforms, among other things.

This settlement is a monumental victory for the protection of America's children and will fundamentally transform how the entire social media industry designs products for kids and teens. Under the settlement, Nebraska will receive up to $201,092,032.56.

Attorney General Hilgers recognizes that this systemic problem extends well beyond a single company. Meta is the first major platform to reach a significant settlement with requirements which will set into place provisions for youth safety.

"We got into this fight to protect kids, and this settlement is a historic step in that direction. This agreement provides meaningful, real, and durable changes that will make a big difference in the lives of kids and their parents," stated Attorney General Hilgers.

The settlement requires Meta to implement a series of safety features on Instagram and Facebook, including:

- Hard cap daily time limits and "Productive Pauses" for children: for its two platforms, Instagram and Facebook, a combined two-hour daily time limit with mandatory pauses after 15 minutes of continuous use and again at 60 and 90 minutes to interrupt endless scrolling. These limits remain in effect for five years. If Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube adopt comparable terms, the daily limit on each platform will drop to 60 minutes for 10 years.

- “Nighttime blocks” restricting children’s access from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

- Limited school-time access for children, eliminating push notifications on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the school year.

- Robust age assurance measures to more effectively verify the age of young users.

- Safer, age-appropriate content controls, including stronger safeguards against bullying, content promoting eating disorders, and content related to suicide and self-harm.

- Stronger, more user-friendly parental controls.

- Limits on social comparison features, including beauty filters and visible “like” counts, that have been linked to poor mental health outcomes in kids and teens.

- Both the implementation and efficacy of the features will be regularly assessed by an independent auditor and the settling states.

These are groundbreaking changes to Instagram and Facebook and more significant and comprehensive than previously ordered by any court. And perhaps most importantly, this settlement represents a down payment toward an industry-wide social media experience that allows kids to connect in a healthy way.

Beginning in 2021, nearly every attorney general in the country cooperated to investigate the social media industry for designing and promoting platforms to children and teens despite known harms. After a bipartisan, nationwide investigation found that Meta designed Instagram’s features to addict children while internally documenting the resulting mental health harms and failing to warn parents, attorneys general across the country sued Meta individually or as part of a consolidated federal lawsuit. This settlement resolves those cases and claims by the other settling states and territories.

Additionally, the settlement also resolves the States’ claims against Meta for its sharing of nonpublic information about Facebook users with third parties, like Cambridge Analytica, leading up to the 2016 election. Nebraska will receive $5,146,813.80.

The attorneys general of Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming joined the settlement.

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