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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL CALLS ON FACEBOOK TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF HATE AND DISINFORMATION

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine, today led a coalition of 19 attorneys general in calling on Facebook to take additional steps to prevent the popular social media website from being used to spread hate and disinformation. Raoul and the coalition also urged Facebook to provide stronger support for users who fall victim to online intimidation and harassment on its platforms.

“As one of the most visited websites in the world, Facebook has a duty to ensure its platform is not used to spread hate and false information,” Raoul said. “Facebook should take the necessary steps to protect its users and stop hate groups from using its platform to recruit new members and intimidate others.”

[In a letter](#) today to Facebook Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg and Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg, Raoul and the attorneys general assert that despite its stated commitment to working to keep its user community safe, Facebook has fallen short in keeping hate content off its platforms and protecting users from online harassment.

The letter follows the release of a Civil Rights Audit of Facebook’s practices — commissioned by the company and completed in July — that faults Facebook for refusing to enforce its own policies against dangerous organizations and individuals, including white supremacists and other extremists.

Recent surveys suggest more than 40 percent of Americans have experienced some form of online harassment. Of those victims, more than 75 percent have reported being harassed on Facebook. The letter urges Facebook to implement several reforms recommended in the Civil Rights Audit to “strengthen its commitment to civil rights and fighting disinformation and discrimination.” It further recommends steps designed to improve Facebook’s supportive services for victims.

Much of the harassment reported by Facebook users focuses on characteristics protected by civil rights laws. Such harassment includes conduct like cyberstalking, maliciously publishing someone’s personal information and filing false police reports to prompt law enforcement response targeting the victim.

Raoul and the coalition acknowledge that Facebook has taken some action to address violations of its terms of service but note that many Facebook users continue to find the redress process “slow, frustrating, and ineffective.”

The reforms recommended in today’s letter, many of which are highlighted in the recent Civil Rights Audit, include calls for Facebook to:

- Aggressively enforce its policies against hate speech and organized hate organizations;
- Allow public, third-party audits of hate content and enforcement;
- Commit to an ongoing, independent analysis of Facebook’s content population scheme and the prompt development of best practices guidance; and
- Expand policies limiting inflammatory advertisements that vilify minority groups.
- Offer live real-time assistance to victims of intimidation and harassment;
- Make information about unlawful harassment and intimidation more readily available; and
- Strengthen filtering, reporting and blocking tools.

Joining Raoul in sending the letter are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont and Wisconsin.