

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, AG Kaul: Push Meta to answer for inadequate customer service to Wisconsin small businesses

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul called on Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, to answer for its poor customer service to Wisconsin small business owners attempting to regain access to their hacked Facebook and Instagram accounts. Recent reporting has documented Wisconsin small businesses are waiting weeks or months to regain access to their hacked account, threatening their ability to receive income.

“While Meta claims to be ‘in the business of small business,’ these small businesses can face enormous obstacles to regaining access to their accounts following a hack, resulting in lost income for weeks to months at a time,” **Senator Baldwin and General Kaul wrote.**

While Meta provides self-help tools in need of customer service, the services are often inadequate for solving business issues and customers are left without access to their accounts. Small business users that pay for additional services from Meta and provide Meta with their financial information may be victims of financial fraud by those that hacked the account – compounding the harm they suffer from losing access to their account.

“Meta’s size is no excuse for inadequate customer service that threatens the ability of Wisconsinites to provide for their families,” **Baldwin and Kaul continued.** “If Meta wants to host billions of users, then it has the responsibility to create

adequate infrastructure to support these users, accounting for varying levels of education, technical knowledge, and primary language. We are deeply concerned that Meta continues to neglect small business users that provide Meta substantial revenue.”

Senator Baldwin also recently [sounded the alarm](#) on Meta’s failure to address malicious actors’ exploitation of its platforms – including Facebook and WhatsApp – to facilitate drug trafficking and human smuggling in the Western Hemisphere.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below.

Jennifer Newstead

Chief Legal Officer

Meta Platforms, Inc.

1 Hacker Way

Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Ms. Newstead:

We write to express concern regarding Meta Platforms, Inc.’s (Meta) inadequate small business customer service and to urge increased responsiveness to its small business users whose accounts have been hacked.

Small businesses across Wisconsin rely on Meta’s platforms – including Facebook and Instagram – to support their small businesses and provide financially for their families. Meta supports more than 200 million businesses on its Facebook platform worldwide, in diverse industries ranging from manufacturing to arts and entertainment. These businesses provide substantial revenue to Meta via paid ads, selling fees, and integrations with its Audience Network and Kustomer platforms. Unfortunately, these small businesses are frequent victims of hacking, resulting in small business owners being locked out of their accounts and unable to provide services to their customers.

While Meta claims to be “in the business of small business,” these small businesses can face enormous obstacles to regaining access to their accounts following a hack, resulting in lost income for weeks to months at a time. These lockouts occur

frequently enough that entire websites have appeared documenting the seemingly endless customer service loop in which small business users can get caught, and these failings have also been documented by the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, National Public Radio, Ars Technica, and local media in Wisconsin and across the country. Small businesses that utilize Meta's paid tools grant Meta access to their financial information, potentially leaving hacked users open to fraud and additional monetary harm. Recent data breaches by Meta only increase the likelihood that small business users will be hacked through no fault of their own, making Meta's poor reputation for responding to small business users all the more concerning.

Meta's size is no excuse for inadequate customer service that threatens the ability of Wisconsinites to provide for their families. If Meta wants to host billions of users, then it has the responsibility to create adequate infrastructure to support these users, accounting for varying levels of education, technical knowledge, and primary language. We are deeply concerned that Meta continues to neglect small business users that provide Meta substantial revenue.

To address the concerns raised by this letter, we request that you provide responses to the following questions by March 9, 2023:

1. How many Instagram and Facebook business users reported being hacked in 2022 and requested assistance from Meta's customer service?
2. What is the average time from reported lockout to successful resolution for business users on Instagram and Facebook that both requested assistance with a hacked account and were able to reach a resolution?
3. In how many languages are Meta's small business self-help and chat tools available?
4. Have Meta's self-help tools gone through user experience testing to ensure ease of use and the ability of the tools to address the needs of hacked small business users?
5. Have Meta's self-help tools been evaluated to ensure they are written in an accessible manner for the average small business user, accounting for varying levels of education and technical knowledge?
6. If a small business user reports a page as hacked, does Meta suspend transactions from that hacked account? If not, why not?
7. If a small business user is not able to reach a resolution for a hacked page through Meta's self-help and chat tools, how can these users elevate their

problem for additional assistance?

8. What steps is Meta taking to improve its customer service for small business users who have lost access to their Facebook or Instagram pages?
9. What steps is Meta taking to improve and deliver guidance to small business account holders about the risks of hacking and steps they can take to mitigate those risks?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

An online version of this release is available [here](#).