

February 23, 2023

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.ⁱ 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,”ⁱⁱ 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.ⁱⁱⁱ 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.^{iv}

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:

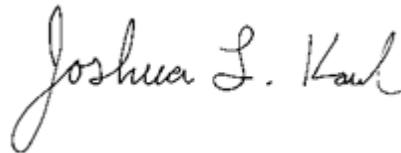
1. How many Instagram and Facebook business users reported being hacked in 2022 and requested assistance from Meta’s customer service?
2. What is the average time from reported lockout to successful resolution for business users on Instagram and Facebook that both requested assistance with a hacked account 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,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Joshua L. Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General

ⁱ Meta, Data for Good Small Business Surveys, at: <https://dataforgood.facebook.com/dfg/tools/future-of-business-survey>; Facebook, U.S. State of Small Business 2020 – A Challenging Year for SMBs, at: <https://dataforgood.facebook.com/dfg/docs/2020-us-state-of-small-business>.

ⁱⁱ S. Sandberg, Celebrating National Small Business Week with New Resources for Diverse Businesses and New Tools for All Small Businesses, at: <https://about.fb.com/news/2022/05/national-small-business-week-new-resources/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, e.g., Reddit.com/r/facebookdisabledme/; FB Disabled Me, at: <https://fbdisabledme.wordpress.com/>; C. Rickert, “SOS: Oh, the Humanity, or Lack Thereof in Google, Meta customer ‘help’”, at: https://madison.com/news/local/ask/sos/sos-oh-the-humanity-or-lack-thereof-in-google-meta-customer-help/article_4f3f30cf-5634-5ec8-81da-9917e5513ffe.html; K. Grind, “Hello? Hello? Is this Facebook? Anybody There? (Nope.)” at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hello-hello-is-this-facebook-anybody-there-nope-11653316237>; T. Hunger, “The Long, Lonely Wait to Recover a Hacked Facebook Account” at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/11/21/hacked-facebook-account/>; S. Bond, “Your Facebook

Account was Hacked. Getting Help May Take Weeks – or \$299,” at: <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/02/1023801277/your-facebook-account-was-hacked-getting-help-may-take-weeks-or-299>; A. Belanger, “Meta Keeps Booting Small-Business Owners for Being Hacked on Facebook, at: <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2022/11/small-businesses-say-facebook-is-enabling-hackers-who-took-over-accounts/>; Iowa Woman’s Livelihood on the Line Due to Facebook Hackers, at: <https://www.kcci.com/amp/article/des-moines-iowa-womans-cheesecake-business-on-the-line-due-to-facebook-hackers/42112445>; Coloradans are Having their Facebook Accounts Hacked, and then Getting Banned for Life, at: <https://www.denver7.com/news/local-news/coloradans-are-having-their-facebook-accounts-hacked-and-then-getting-banned-for-life>.

^{iv} See, e.g., J. Gillum, “Facebook is Warning 1 Million Users about Stolen Usernames, Passwords,” at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-07/facebook-warning-1-million-about-stolen-usernames-passwords>; A. Holmes, “533 Million Facebook Users’ Phone Numbers and Personal Data Have Been Leaked Online,” at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/stolen-data-of-533-million-facebook-users-leaked-online-2021-4>.