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STATE OF ALABAMA

MEMORANDUM

TO: All State Agency Heads

FROM: Governor Kay Ivey 

DATE: December 12, 2022

SUBJECT: Protecting Alabama from Chinese Infiltration by Prohibiting the Use of TikTok on State IT Infrastructure

Protecting Alabama's IT infrastructure from cyber threats is vital to ensuring the safety and success of our State. The computer devices and networks used by our state government house significant amounts of Alabamians' sensitive data. They also ensure the proper functioning of numerous automated government functions.

Recently, national security officials have warned of growing threats posed by the video-sharing app TikTok. TikTok is owned by a Chinese parent company and thus potentially subject to Chinese laws enabling its data to be shared with the Chinese Communist Party.

Disturbingly, TikTok harvests vast amounts of data from its users, much of which has no legitimate connection to the app's supposed purpose of video sharing. For example, when users run the TikTok app for the first time, they give TikTok access to information such as their device brand and model, mobile carrier, browsing history, app and file names and types, keystroke patterns and rhythms, wireless connections, and geolocation. Use of TikTok involving state IT infrastructure thus creates an unacceptable vulnerability to Chinese infiltration operations.

Given these serious security concerns related to the use of TikTok, I have asked the Secretary of Information Technology to update his agency's policies to prevent TikTok from accessing the state IT network and state IT devices—even while providing exceptions for law enforcement and other essential governmental uses of the app.

These new policies accompany this memorandum. Consistent with these policies, executive branch agencies should immediately take all necessary steps to prevent TikTok from accessing sensitive state data.

Thank you for all you do to ensure the success and safety of our great State. Together, we will defend the State of Alabama and its people from the growing security risk posed by TikTok.