



Florida Department of  
Law Enforcement

Richard L. Swearingen  
Commissioner

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September 14, 2020

The Honorable Jimmy Patronis  
Florida Chief Financial Officer  
Department of Financial Services  
The Capitol, PL-11  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399



Dear Chief Financial Officer Patronis:

On Friday, July 31, 2020, the primary suspect in the Twitter breach you recently inquired about was arrested in Tampa and charged with 30 felonies, sending a strong message that these crimes have serious consequences and will not be tolerated in Florida. This specific security breach, in which dozens of accounts were accessed and used without proper authorization, appears to be the result of a Twitter employee being bribed or coerced to give bad actors access to specific accounts. The FBI San Francisco Field Office, in the same city where Twitter is headquartered, was the primary investigative agency for this incident. FDLE partnered with the FBI's Cyber Task Force and FDLE agents continue to actively assist this investigation regarding Florida connections.

This incident highlights the risks involved in using social media to provide official information. These technologies are inexpensive platforms reaching millions of citizens 24/7. While these tools are often used by the public as a source of important information, news and entertainment, their use should be carefully implemented and monitored. Misuse of social media by perpetrators acting under the guise of government officials could have dire consequences for the economy, stock market, interest rates, public safety or foreign affairs, and even has the power to influence elections.

Cybercrime, including the use of social media to perpetrate financial fraud, can be extremely lucrative to criminals and extremely costly to victims. This makes it imperative for agencies and organizations to employ the enclosed recommendations in securing social media accounts and take additional measures to ensure organizations critically evaluate information on social media prior to taking action that could have adverse consequences.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Swearingen  
Commissioner

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Attachment