



ACLU of Massachusetts Raises Concern About Latest Demonstration of Personal Data Vulnerability

Reported hacking of MassHealth web site illustrates problems with Fusion Center, Real ID

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BOSTON -- The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts today voiced concern over reported hacking of the state's MassHealth website. On Wednesday, a hacker reportedly infiltrated the site and put up an unauthorized message.

"Though in this case there seems to be no evidence that personal information has been compromised, the hacking of an important state website is yet another illustration of a serious problem," said Carol Rose, Executive Director of the ACLU of Massachusetts.

"We know that databases of personal information are a fact of modern life, but a long string of security breaches -- notably the TJX breach, as well as examples in both the private and public sector of missing laptops and storage media with thousands of people's personal information -- shows the extreme care that must be taken with personal data," said Rose.

The ACLU of Massachusetts remains highly concerned about security at the Commonwealth Fusion Center -- a massive government data-collection and sharing center in Maynard, Massachusetts -- as well as security for the proposed Real ID national identity card, which would create vast new databases of personal information, including Social Security numbers.

The Fusion Center, established by Governor Romney in 2005, has access to personal information about Massachusetts residents from both public and private sources, yet is subject to no regulation or oversight. Real ID has been criticized as a civil liberties nightmare that violates fundamental privacy rights, and as prohibitively expensive and unwieldy.

"These databases are treasure troves for identity thieves, they are vulnerable to misuse, and we have no reason to believe that appropriate safeguards exist or will be put into place," said Rose.

For more information about the Fusion Center, see:

http://www.aclum.org/news/ACLUM_12_12_07_Fusion_Centers.pdf

For more information about Real ID, see: <http://www.realnighmare.org/>

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