



# State of Mississippi

**TATE REEVES**  
Governor

January 11, 2023

Dear State Agency and Department Heads:

The protection, safety, and security of Mississippi's state government is ever more essential with the growing concern over foreign cybersecurity threats. In performing their official duties many State employees within your agency now routinely use state-issued cellular phones, laptops, and other wireless communication equipment capable of connecting to the internet. With this convenience comes the responsibility to ensure cybersecurity, safeguard sensitive information, and protect Mississippi's critical infrastructure.

Applications and websites such as TikTok can provide the Chinese Communist Party the technology to gain access to information stored on such devices including location services and browsing history. TikTok has over 100 million users in the U.S. and is owned by ByteDance Ltd., a Chinese company that employs Communist Party members and has a subsidiary partially owned by the Chinese Communist Party. TikTok can harvest data from its users' devices providing potential access to sensitive information to the Chinese government. The Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have prohibited the use of TikTok on federal government devices. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has also warned that the Chinese government could control software or data collection on devices that could compromise sensitive information.

In view of these concerns, the use of this application presents a security threat. Accordingly, it is imperative that you take swift action to protect sensitive information and critical infrastructure. Effective immediately, please take steps to ensure that none of your agency employees download or use TikTok or other software applications developed by ByteDance Ltd on their state-issued cellular phones, laptops, and other wireless communication equipment capable of connecting to the internet except for bona fide law enforcement, investigative, or public safety purposes. And to the extent some of your employees use or have downloaded such applications, they be directed to remove, delete and uninstall such applications from state-issued devices no later than January 31, 2022.

I have further instructed the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services to block access to TikTok from the state network. We must work together to protect Mississippi against all efforts to access, compromise and interfere with the State's sensitive information and critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Tate Reeves, written in a cursive style.

Tate Reeves  
Governor

cc: David C. Johnson, Executive Director  
MS Department of Information Technology Services