



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Lanza Falls Victim to Internet Impersonation

ANDREW J LANZA July 26, 2010

Ironically, Lanza Authored the First Law in the Nation Which Makes this Type of Identity Theft a Crime

Senator Lanza has learned that an unknown person has created a bogus Facebook profile which uses his name, biography and picture. Ironically, Senator Lanza authored the cutting edge legislation that was signed into law in 2008, which makes Internet impersonation a crime under New York State's penal law. The legislation provides that a person who impersonates another by use of the Internet or electronic communication shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

Lanza drafted the legislation in 2007 in response to the growing availability of personal data online, and the increased use in social networking sites. Internet impersonation had become a growing problem with people's use of computers for everything from online banking and shopping, to dating and networking sites. Criminals were evolving along with technology and doing great damage in cyberspace.

When Senator Lanza introduced the legislation in 2008 he said, "New troubling trends involve perpetrators going online, presenting themselves as another person, even posting photos of the person they are impersonating." Ironically, 2 years later, Lanza finds himself in a similar scenario. While no malicious intent has yet been indicated in this instance, we do know that constituents have contacted the site, believing they are communicating with the Senator. Senator Lanza hopes this case underscores and helps people become more aware of

this type of internet impersonation and the dangers associated with it. This demonstrates how easy it is for someone to act as though they are you, which would allow them potential access to your personal information as well as personal information from friends and family who would be duped into believing they are communicating to you. The good news is that Senator Lanza authored a new law which would allow us to prosecute people who engage in this type of impersonation.

The alleged imposter added some of Lanza's closest friends and staff on Facebook and even created a bogus email address (a_lanza64@yahoo.com) which uses Andrew's first initial, last name and birth year. Lanza fears that constituents and personal friends may reach out to this imposter under the impression it is the Senator's legitimate profile, or worse, the imposter may attempt to defame him.

"In today's world of constantly evolving technology, it is critically important that our laws are kept up to date to protect people utilizing the Internet," said Senator Andrew Lanza (R – Staten Island). "Computer criminals are increasingly finding ways to defraud and victimize people, their intentions ranging from harassment and defamation to identity theft and sexual predation. My law addresses the growing danger posed by Internet impersonators by penalizing this type of identity theft and enabling prosecutors to better protect victims and provide for tougher punishment for those who misrepresent themselves on the Internet."

Lanza's staff has attempted to contact the person operating the profile but have gotten no response thus far. Senator Lanza has also contacted Richmond County DA Dan Donovan to investigate this incident. The link to the bogus profile is:
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=100001331742119&ref=ts>

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