



## **Five Ways to Protect Yourself Against Online Cyber Threats** *By State Rep. Lynda Schlegel Culver (R-Northumberland/Snyder)*

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month, an annual initiative led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity is present in every aspect of our lives, whether it be at home, work, school, or elsewhere. Cybercrime can cause major inconveniences, including financial ruin or a threat to one's reputation, identity and overall safety.

Since most of us are connected to the Internet at all times in one way or another, I thought it would be helpful to share some simple tips to help you and your family stay safe online.

- Use complex passwords with a combination of numbers, symbols and letters. Use different passwords for separate accounts, and change your passwords regularly.
- Update security software, operating system and web browsers to prevent attackers from taking advantage of known vulnerabilities.
- Limit the amount of personal information you share online and use privacy settings to avoid sharing information widely.
- If a link in an online post or email looks suspicious, delete it. Links are often the way cyber criminals compromise your computer.
- Create an extra layer of security, beyond your password, by enabling stronger authentication, which is available on most major email, social media and financial accounts. For example, some sites require or allow users to receive a one-time login code sent via text to a mobile device, which helps to verify that a user has authorized access.

I encourage you to take a few steps to protect yourself and your family online. This information is from DHS's Stop.Think.Connect initiative, a national public awareness campaign to empower the American public to be safer and more secure online. For more information about the agency's efforts, or additional details about what you've read here, visit [www.dhs.gov/stothinkconnect](http://www.dhs.gov/stothinkconnect).

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