

Campaign says private Romney emails possibly hacked

June 6 2012

Authorities are investigating a report that Mitt Romney's personal email account has been hacked, his presidential campaign said Tuesday.

The website Gawker reported that an unnamed hacker had broken into the Republican flagbearer's private Hotmail account by guessing the answer to a security question about Romney's favorite pet.

The anonymous hacker, whom Gawker said tipped off the website to his action, said the same password also gave him access to Romney's account for file-sharing service [Dropbox](#), but that he did not provide any screen-grabs or other evidence of his tampering.

"The proper authorities are investigating this crime," campaign spokeswoman Gail Gitcho said in a statement. She declined to confirm whether the hacked [email account](#) was Romney's Hotmail account, if he was still using it, or what sort of data may have been compromised.

"We will have no further comment on it," Gitcho said.

Romney is not the first US politician whose emails faced security threats during the heat of a presidential campaign.

In 2008, a young man hacked into the account of vice presidential candidate [Sarah Palin](#), who was on the Republican ticket with [White House](#) hopeful [John McCain](#).

A number of her emails and two family photos taken from her account were posted online.

The FBI soon traced the hacking back to a Tennessee college student, who was arrested and sentenced to one year in jail.

The Romney hack, if confirmed, marks a potential deepening of email headaches for the White House candidate.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported on its website Tuesday on internal emails from Romney's time as governor of Massachusetts, that show how Romney was involved in negotiating the now-controversial [health care law](#) which passed in his state.

The emails were part of a small cache of messages to survive Romney's administration, after his aides reportedly scrubbed servers of emails and purchased the office's hard drives.

The emails, which the newspaper obtained through a public-records request, show how Romney and aides strongly defended the law's requirement that every resident of Massachusetts have or buy health insurance.

A similar, so-called individual mandate is the most controversial portion of President Barack Obama's landmark health care reform law.

The White House has said Romney's law in Massachusetts formed the basis of the Obama plan. Romney insists he never believed his plan should be used nationally and, if elected president, he would order the law repealed.

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Citation: Campaign says private Romney emails possibly hacked (2012, June 6) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-06-campaign-private-romney-emails-possibly.html>

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