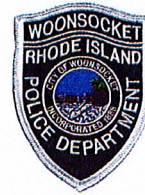


Thomas F. Oates III
Chief of Police

Woonsocket Police Department

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March 25, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill No. H-5659 Relating to Criminal Procedure – Automated License Plate Readers.

Dear Chairman Craven:

The purpose of this letter is to express my strong opposition to House Bill No. H-5659 as it is currently written.

The Woonsocket Police Department began a pilot program with Flock Safety Cameras in September of 2021 testing 13 ALPR cameras within the City of Woonsocket. After a workshop with the Woonsocket City Council in August 2021 which was open to the public the pilot program began and continued until November of 2022. Council meetings were also held in December of 2021 and February of 2022 where the approval was sort as well as funding for a 3 year contract for 15 ALPR cameras with Flock Safety. These meetings were open to the public and were advertised with the items that were on the agenda to include Flock Safety ALPR and the request for funding. During the February meeting the funding was unanimously approved by the City Council.

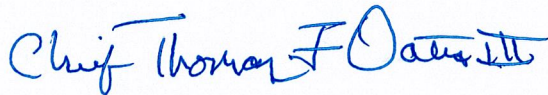
To date the cameras have provided leads which resulted in the recovery of stolen vehicles and the arrest of individuals operating them. One particular arrest involved a 14 year old runaway who was refueling the stolen vehicle stolen. We will never know what injuries we might have prevent to him or others while operating this vehicle during the course of that night. We also know that individuals operating stolen vehicles are usually using the vehicle to commit other often more serious crime. Swift apprehension prevents crime and protects others from becoming victims of these individual's illegal activities. Individuals wanted for various violent felony crimes to included domestic assault and sexual assault have been apprehended. The apprehension of these individuals assures the safety of the victims they have assaulted.

There is strong community support for this program in the City of Woonsocket. I was appointed Chief of Police in Woonsocket in August of 2016. I am out in the community on a daily basis interacting with various community groups, business owners and City residents. Feedback on the

Flock Safety Camera System has been overwhelming positive. My office as well as Professional Standards have not received any complaints about the camera system and the intended use of the system. Our goals are to prevent crime in Woonsocket and apprehending those involved in illegal activity. I feel this system is a tremendous new tool in accomplishing both those goals. I understand the privacy concerns of some citizens and don't dismiss them. I do believe that with the policies and procedures we have in place and how the system actually works we can accomplish both. The usage of the FLOCK Camera System is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Woonsocket Police Departments Office of Professional Standards. The audit which is forwarded to me when completed checks who have used the system and for what reason ensuring it's use is related to a specific criminal investigation. I am confident that the policies and procedures being followed by the Woonsocket Police Department safeguard any privacy concerns the public may have.

In closing as stated before I strongly oppose the proposed House Bill H-5659 as it is currently written.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chief Thomas F. Oates III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chief" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name.

Chief Thomas F. Oates III
Woonsocket Police Department