

2026-H 8077

Automated license plate, readers

Chair McEntee, members of the judiciary committee. I am Gregory S. Dias, a resident of the City of East Providence. I am an attorney with a Law office in the City of East Providence, but I am here on my own behalf. I wish to thank the Second Vice Chair of the committee Rep Matthew Dawson for filing this bill at my request last year and for filing this revised bill this year. I testified in favor of the house bill last year. I am submitting this written testimony in support of this revised bill as I was unable to attend the hearing on March 24, 2026.

The bill before you seeks to add state regulations to Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) that are being utilized in the State of Rhode Island by numerous police departments without any state regulation. At present there are over 240 ALPR's in over 30 municipalities being utilized in Rhode Island. At present the only regulation regarding these devices are policies designed by local police departments and/or city or town councils, and these policies are not uniform or comprehensive.

The Rhode Island legislature has allowed and regulated red light cameras and speed cameras. Red light cameras take pictures of vehicles but by state regulations ONLY when a vehicle proceeds through a red light which is a violation of state law, a traffic violation. The speed cameras take photos of vehicles but ONLY when a vehicle exceeds a certain speed limit in front of a school and only when school is in session – a speeding violation. The times and dates that these speed cameras are utilized are regulated by state law. Both red light cameras and school cameras cannot be utilized unless the presence of the cameras are advertised on the road where the device is being utilized.

In contrast, the ALPR's locations are not advertised, and they take pictures of every car that passes the camera 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year. You may ask yourself what state law or traffic law did these individual drivers commit that would require their vehicle to be pictured. The answer is ABSOLUTELY NONE. The picture is taken of every vehicle just because you were driving on the road where a camera exists, and the photos are maintained for 30 days.

In my humble opinion these cameras are an excessive and unreasonable privacy invasion without cause.

Unfortunately, it appears these devices are here to stay as they serve a law-enforcement purpose as they were used to find the Brown University shooter and other felony offenders, but they should not be allowed without state regulation, which is the reason for this bill. ALPR's need state regulation to prevent miss-use, mistaken use, or use by federal agencies (ICE) or other state agencies for implementation of laws that contradict RI Law.

The ACLU has submitted testimony regarding other possible misuses of ALPR's including the tracking of immigrants who may not be criminals or the sharing of RI information to other states that have tried to utilize this information to track individuals leaving one state to travel for reproductive care in states that allow such care as does Rhode Island. The sharing of the ALPR information with other states is very troubling, which is another reason for these regulations. Please see the attached three articles The Dangers of License Plate Recorders in Post-Roe America, Civil Liberties Groups Demand California Police Stop Sharing Drivers Location Data with Police in Anti-Abortion States and Home Depot investors question ICE raid issues.

State regulation of these very intrusive ALPRs, and not just local and town policies, are needed.

Many of you may have read the book 1984 written by George Orwell. You may wish to revisit that book which was written in 1949 which is very prophetic to what we are experiencing now in Rhode Island and in this country. Big brother is watching and legislation is needed to control this technology. We cannot allow technology to control us or deny us our freedoms.

I predict you will see the need for more legislation to regulate new technologies especially facial recognition software. The Rhode Island Supreme Court is now discussing the implementation of facial recognition software into the Rhode Island court buildings. These devices will also need regulation to prevent their misuse.

I respectfully request that the House Judiciary Committee Approve House BILL H-8077 to regulate this intrusive technology to protect your constituents and all citizens of Rhode Island.

Thank you,
Gregory S. Dias
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The Danger of License Plate Readers in Post-Roe America

Known as ALPRs, this surveillance tech is pervasive across the US—and could soon be used by police and anti-abortion groups alike.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT K. CHIN/ALAMY



SINCE THE UNITED States Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last month, America's extensive surveillance state could soon be turned against those seeking abortions or providing abortion care.

Currently, nine states have almost entirely banned abortion, and more are expected to follow suit. Many Republican lawmakers in these states are discussing the possibility of preventing people from traveling across state lines to obtain an abortion. If such plans are enacted and withstand legal scrutiny, one of the key technologies that could be deployed to track people trying to cross state lines is automated license plate readers (ALPRs). They're employed heavily by police forces across the US, but they're also used by private actors.

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ALPRs are cameras that are mounted on street poles, overpasses, and elsewhere that can identify and capture license plate numbers on passing cars for the purpose of issuing speeding tickets and tolls, locating stolen cars, and more. State and local police maintain

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databases of captured license plates and frequently use those databases in criminal investigations.

The police have access to not only license plate data collected by their own ALPRs but also data gathered by private companies. Firms like Flock Safety and Motorola Solutions have their own networks of ALPRs that are mounted to the vehicles of private companies and organizations they work with, such as car repossession outfits. Flock, for instance, claims it's collecting license plate data in roughly 1,500 cities and can capture data from over a billion vehicles every month.

"They have fleets of cars that have ALPRs on them that just suck up data. They sell that to various clients, including repo firms and government agencies. They also sell them to police departments," says Jay Stanley, a senior policy analyst at the ACLU. "It's a giant, nationwide mass surveillance system. That obviously has serious implications should interstate travel become part of forced-birth enforcement."

In a statement to WIRED, a Flock Safety spokesperson said the company does not provide customer data to third parties. "We will never share or sell customer data to any third parties. While we cannot speak for any other vendors, we have never and will never sell data to repossession companies or third-party organizations, including anti-abortion groups," the company said.

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However, anyone can become a first party by purchasing the company's cameras. (Its customers often include neighborhoods and home owners associations.) Flock Safety says its cameras are installed in more than 1,500 cities in 42 states, which are connected to Flock's centralized camera network. A March 2021 Vice investigation based on Flock-related emails obtained from nearly 20 police departments allows anyone who administers a Flock camera to

"make the data Flock captures available to, say, the police, the home owner association's board, or the individual members of an entire neighborhood." In addition to private customers, Flock has also reportedly partnered with hundreds of police departments across the US.

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Motorola Solutions did not respond to a request for comment prior to publication.

Stanley says that ALPRs are more concentrated in metropolitan areas, but they're also common in rural areas. If someone is traveling out of state to get an abortion, police could likely repeatedly identify where their license plate was scanned during the trip and the times it was scanned. With that information, they may be able to sketch out that person's travel patterns. Police don't need a warrant to obtain this information because license plates are out in the open and can be seen by anyone, which is not necessarily the case when the police want to obtain someone's location data from their phone or use another tracking method.

"The more densely situated ALPR scanners are, the more they come to resemble GPS tracking," Stanley says.

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SUBMIT

Civil Liberties Groups Demand California Police Stop Sharing Drivers' Location Data With Police In Anti-Abortion States

This sharing by 71 CA police agencies violates state law and could be used by other states to identify and prosecute abortion seekers and providers.

PRESS RELEASE | MAY 25, 2023

SAN FRANCISCO—Seventy-one* California police agencies in 22 counties must immediately stop sharing automated license plate reader (ALPR) data with law enforcement agencies in other states because it violates California law and could enable prosecution of abortion seekers and providers elsewhere, three civil liberties groups demanded Thursday in letters to those agencies.

The letters from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLU NorCal), and the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU SoCal) gave the agencies a deadline of June 15 to comply and respond. A months-long EFF investigation involving hundreds of public records requests uncovered that many California police departments share records containing detailed driving profiles of local residents with out-of-state agencies.

ALPR camera systems collect and store location information about drivers, including dates, times, and locations. This sensitive information can reveal where individuals work, live, associate, worship—or seek reproductive health services and other medical care.

“ALPRs invade people’s privacy and violate the rights of entire communities, as they often are deployed in poor and historically overpoliced areas regardless of crime rates,” said EFF Senior Staff Attorney Adam Schwartz. “Sharing ALPR data with law enforcement in states that criminalize abortion undermines California’s extensive efforts to protect reproductive health privacy.”

The letters note how the nation’s legal landscape has changed in the past year.

“Particularly since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ALPR technology and the information it collects is vulnerable to exploitation against people seeking, providing, and facilitating access to abortion,” the letters say. “Law enforcement officers in anti-abortion jurisdictions who receive the locations of drivers collected by California-based ALPRs may seek to use that information to monitor abortion clinics and the vehicles seen around them and closely track

the movements of abortion seekers and providers. This threatens even those obtaining or providing abortions in California, since several anti-abortion states plan to criminalize and prosecute those who seek or assist in out-of-state abortions.”

Idaho, for example, has enacted a law that makes helping a pregnant minor get an abortion in another state punishable by two to five years in prison.

The agencies that received the demand letters have shared ALPR data with law enforcement agencies across the country, including agencies in states with abortion restrictions including Alabama, Idaho, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. Since 2016, sharing any ALPR data with out-of-state or federal law enforcement agencies is a violation of the California Civil Code (SB 34). Nevertheless, many agencies continue to use services such as Vigilant Solutions or Flock Safety to make the ALPR data they capture available to out-of-state and federal agencies.

California law enforcement’s sharing of ALPR data with law enforcement in states that criminalize abortion also undermines California’s extensive efforts to protect reproductive health privacy, specifically a 2022 law (AB 1242) prohibiting state and local agencies from providing abortion-related information to out-of-state agencies.

For one of the new letters from EFF, ACIU NorCal, and ACLU SoCal: <https://eff.org/document/sample-alpr-demand-letter-tracy-police-department>

For information on how ALPRs threaten abortion access: <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2022/09/automated-license-plate-readers-threaten-abortion-access-heres-how-policymakers>

For general information about ALPRs:

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Home Depot investors question ICE raid issues

Arriana McLymore and Ross Kerber

REUTERS

NEW YORK – A group of Home Depot investors is asking the company to review its partnership with surveillance firm Flock Safety and state how its data is used and shared with law enforcement, following reports by an independent media outlet that the vendor's data has been used in Immigration and Customs Enforcement investigations.

Home Depot locations have become hotbeds for ICE arrests, after Homeland Security adviser Stephen Miller said the agency should target the home improvement chain, where migrant day laborers are known to gather. Investors in several companies are increasingly seeking answers to how President Donald Trump's immigration policies and enforcement are affecting company operations and reputation.

Zevin Asset Management, a sustainability-minded investor that owns more than \$7million in Home Depot stock, is leading a shareholder proposal with 17 co-filers asking Home Depot to evaluate and report the risks associated with sharing data with third-party surveillance vendors.

Zevin's proposal comes after an investment group that holds shares of Walmart and Amazon.com asked the retailers for details on how the immigration crackdown is affecting their finances and supply chains, and as protests erupt after the fatal shooting of a 37-year-old woman by an ICE agent in Minneapolis.

The investor group wants an 'assessment of privacy and civil rights risks, including discrimination or wrongful detention from misuse of customer data,' according to the proposal seen by Reuters.

'Such practices may expose the Company to financial and legal risks, including potential data breaches and enforcement of evolving state privacy laws,' shareholders said in the proposal. 'The Company already faces reputational risks stemming from frequent immigration enforcement raids occurring near its stores and heightened public concerns regarding data privacy.'

The company's annual shareholder meeting is expected in May.

Home Depot declined to comment on whether it would reevaluate its contract with Flock Safety or any other surveillance vendors. The company has faced criticism for ICE raids in its store parking lots, where immigrant day laborers often congregate looking for opportunities to work on construction projects. Some critics have said the company should speak out against the raids, which have prompted protests at some of its stores.

A Home Depot spokesperson said: 'We cannot legally interfere with federal enforcement agencies, including preventing them from coming into our stores and parking lots.'

Like other retailers, Home Depot collects demographic information including age, race, ethnicity and gender from companies that provide services on its behalf for fraud prevention, security and asset protection, according to its website.

The company discloses the information to 'law enforcement, public and government authorities' that it considers 'reasonably necessary to comply with law, support investigations, and protect the rights and property.'

Home Depot also uses Flock Safety automated license-plate camera readers in its parking lots and in stores. The company does not grant access to its license-plate readers to federal law enforcement, the company spokesperson said. Reports by digital publication 404 Media said ICE agents have used Flock Safety's data for immigration enforcement investigations after being sent the data by local law enforcement. Flock Safety does not have contracts with the Department of Homeland Security or its subagencies, including ICE, according to a source familiar with the matter.

The sharing of Flock Safety data by local police departments with ICE creates 'de facto federal surveillance without transparency or consent,' the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, of which Zevin is a member, said in a letter to Home Depot's board of directors seen by Reuters.

The home improvement chain, which is not notified ahead of ICE enforcement, has advised employees to report immigration raids to the company, according to the spokesperson. The raids are recorded in a centralized database. Home Depot gives employees the option to go home, with pay, when these events occur.

Most of the shareholder resolutions, including the one at Home Depot, are nonbinding. A change by U.S. securities regulators could mean fewer such resolutions make it to corporate ballots in 2026. If this one does, the results could show the extent to which investors are worried about the financial implications of Trump's immigration policies.



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