

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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August 6, 2025

Garrett Langley
Chief Executive Officer
Flock Group Inc.
1170 Howell Mill Road NW, Suite 210
Atlanta, GA 30318

Dear Mr. Langley,

We write regarding reports that federal and local law enforcement officials are using license plate reader technology operated by Flock Group Inc. (Flock) to wrongly track and to potentially harm people, in concerning violation of Americans' privacy, freedom, and civil liberties. Recently, local authorities in Texas reportedly used Flock's automatic license plate reader technology to conduct a nationwide search for a woman they claimed had a self-administered abortion in Texas.¹ As part of this search, Texas law enforcement appears to have reviewed footage from more than 83,000 automatic license plate reader cameras, including cameras in Washington and Illinois, where abortion is lawfully protected as a basic right.² Tracking a woman across state lines for this purpose—and allowing authorities in anti-abortion states to violate the freedom and privacy of people in states that protect abortion access—is a gross misuse and abuse of surveillance technology, and could result in the prosecution of women who travel to seek necessary reproductive care. ICE agents have also reportedly used Flock data to track immigrants, improperly accessing license plate data in states and localities with laws or ordinances in place that prohibit the use of their resources to assist with the arrest of law-abiding undocumented residents. Given the vast amount of data collected by Flock cameras, and the enormous potential for abuse, it is critical that Flock, law enforcement entities, and state and local governments are transparent and accountable for how this sensitive data is accessed and by whom.

Flock operates thousands of cameras across the country, which capture detailed data about license plates and vehicles. These cameras are marketed as a tool to solve crimes, such as speeding or kidnappings. Automatic license plate reader technology can help law enforcement respond to Amber Alerts, collect tolls, or identify stolen vehicles.³ Despite these lawful and

¹ *A Texas Cop Searched License Plate Cameras Nationwide for a Woman Who Got an Abortion*, 404 Media (May 29, 2025) (online at www.404media.co/a-texas-cop-searched-license-plate-cameras-nationwide-for-a-woman-who-got-an-abortion/).

² *She Got an Abortion. So a Texas Cop Used 83,000 Cameras to Track Her Down.*, Electronic Frontier Foundation (May 30, 2025) (online at www.eff.org/deeplinks/2025/05/she-got-abortion-so-texas-cop-used-83000-cameras-track-her-down).

³ Flock Safety, *Blog Post: Safety at Speed: How Police Across the U.S. Used Flock to Protect Their Communities* (May 26, 2025) (online at www.flocksafety.com/blog/flock-safety-solved-stories-recap-edition-102).

even beneficial uses of automatic license plate reader technology, there are mounting concerns that it could serve as a mass surveillance system that can track Americans' every move.⁴

When attempting to locate an individual using Flock data, officials are required to provide a reason for their request. It is not clear whether law enforcement is required to provide a warrant or a court order.⁵ On May 9, 2025, an officer from the Johnson County Sheriff's Office in Texas provided "had an abortion, search for female" as his reason for using Flock's "National Lookup" feature to search automatic license plate reader data captured across multiple states.⁶ This search reportedly covered 6,809 Flock networks, or more than 83,000 cameras.⁷

One of the precincts accessed by the Johnson County Sheriff's Office through Flock's National Lookup feature was the Mount Prospect Police Department in Illinois. According to the Mount Prospect Police Department, it was not made aware prior to opting into the National Lookup program that doing so would allow other law enforcement agencies who utilize the program to search for Mount Prospect data without a data-sharing agreement. The Mount Prospect Police Department asserted that using Illinois data to track a woman who had accessed abortion care amounted to "misuse" of its data, and has since opted out of the National Lookup program and revoked out-of-state law enforcement access to the department's license plate reader data.⁸ Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias has reportedly characterized this search through Illinois data as illegal.⁹

Illinois is one of the dozens of states that protects the right to access abortion care.¹⁰ States that have chosen to protect access to vital health care services should not be forced to aid other states in prosecuting people who access such care. Notably, individuals cannot choose

⁴ Institute for Justice, *Press Release: Public Interest Law Firm Calls on Arkansas City to Remove Surveillance Camera from in Front of Innocent Family's Home, Not Renew Contract with Camera Company* (July 17, 2025) (online at <https://ij.org/press-release/public-interest-law-firm-calls-on-arkansas-city-to-remove-surveillance-camera-from-in-front-of-innocent-familys-home-not-renew-contract-with-camera-company/>).

⁵ *A Texas Cop Searched License Plate Cameras Nationwide for a Woman Who Got an Abortion*, 404 Media (May 29, 2025) (online at www.404media.co/a-texas-cop-searched-license-plate-cameras-nationwide-for-a-woman-who-got-an-abortion/); Flock Safety, Evidence Policy (online at www.flocksafety.com/legal/flock-evidence-policy#:~:text=Flock%20will%20notify%20customers%20when,challenge%20or%20reject%20such%20request) (accessed July 30, 2025).

⁶ *She Got an Abortion. So a Texas Cop Used 83,000 Cameras to Track Her Down.*, Electronic Frontier Foundation (May 30, 2025) (online at www.eff.org/deeplinks/2025/05/she-got-abortion-so-texas-cop-used-83000-cameras-track-her-down).

⁷ *A Texas Cop Searched License Plate Cameras Nationwide for a Woman Who Got an Abortion*, 404 Media (May 29, 2025) (online at www.404media.co/a-texas-cop-searched-license-plate-cameras-nationwide-for-a-woman-who-got-an-abortion/).

⁸ *Secretary of State's Office Says Law Enforcement Using License Plate Reader Data Illegally*, Chicago Tribune (June 13, 2025) (online at www.chicagotribune.com/2025/06/12/license-plate-reader-audio-ordered/).

⁹ *CEO of Law Enforcement Tech Speaks Up After Alleged Data Grab in Illinois*, Springfield State Journal-Register (July 7, 2025) (online at www.sj-r.com/story/news/state/2025/07/07/flock-safety-ceo-speaks-up-after-alleged-data-grab-in-illinois/84384357007/).

¹⁰ See Guttmacher, *Interactive Map: U.S. Abortion Policies and Access After Roe* (online at <https://states.guttmacher.org/policies/>) (accessed July 10, 2025).

whether their license plate data is collected and scanned by Flock. This data is captured as individual members of the public go about their daily lives, travelling on public streets, and reportedly then becomes accessible to local officials from unrelated jurisdictions across the country. Members of the public are not informed, and they have no opportunity to opt out or protect their privacy. It appears that Flock is allowing its automatic license plate reader technology to be used to indiscriminately track and collect personal data, infringing on individuals' privacy rights and—by allowing law enforcement to track and prosecute them for the simple act of accessing health care—exposing them to danger.

Flock data is also reportedly being used by federal law enforcement agents for queries related to immigration. This occurs even in jurisdictions where local authorities have determined that in order to further public safety by preserving public trust and cooperation between police and local communities, local law enforcement resources will not be used for federal immigration enforcement.¹¹ For example, an analyst with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) reportedly gained access to the Richmond, Virginia Police Department's license plate reader information through Flock's system and made unauthorized queries for purposes of immigration enforcement. The Richmond Police Department works in partnership with ATF on violent crime prevention, but the Richmond Police Department is not responsible for enforcing federal immigration law, does not investigate people's immigration status, and does not have any immigration enforcement agreements with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).¹² According to the Richmond Police Department, ATF would not have been granted access to the system for the purposes of immigration enforcement if the agency had sought permission to access Flock data. Sharing data would have been a direct violation of Richmond Police Department policy and would not align with the Department's commitment to community trust and public safety. Richmond Police have since permanently blocked all federal agencies from accessing Richmond's license plate reader system for purposes of immigration enforcement.¹³

Flock data logs obtained by 404 Media reportedly describe approximately 4,000 immigration-related searches nationwide, including in Illinois, California, and Virginia.¹⁴ These searches, some of which list the reason for the search as "ice fugitive" or "CBP," raise the

¹¹ Cato Institute, *A Hearing with Sanctuary City Mayors* (Mar. 5, 2025) (online at www.cato.org/testimony/hearing-sanctuary-city-mayors).

¹² *Richmond Police Chief Apologizes for February ATF Access Grant to Flock System*, Cville Right Now (July 9, 2025) (online at <https://cvillerrightnow.com/news/208802-richmond-police-chief-apologizes-for-february-atf-access-grant-to-flock-system/>).

¹³ *Richmond Police Chief Apologizes for February ATF Access Grant to Flock System*, Cville Right Now (July 9, 2025) (online at <https://cvillerrightnow.com/news/208802-richmond-police-chief-apologizes-for-february-atf-access-grant-to-flock-system/>); *Richmond Police Ban Feds from Tracking Immigrants' License Plate Data*, Axios (July 9, 2025) (online at www.axios.com/local/richmond/2025/07/09/immigrant-license-plate-tracking-richmond-police).

¹⁴ *The Feds' Hidden Immigration Weapon: Virginia's Surveillance Network*, VPM (July 7, 2025) (online at www.vpm.org/news/2025-07-07/vcij-immigration-enforcement-flock-safety-license-plate-readers-poggenklass); *Flock Removes States from National Lookup Tool After ICE and Abortion Searches Revealed*, 404 Media (June 25, 2025) (online at www.404media.co/flock-removes-states-from-national-lookup-tool-after-ice-and-abortion-searches-revealed/).

question of whether law enforcement agencies are using Flock’s data system to pursue efforts “beyond its original purpose of criminal investigations and locating missing persons”—particularly as being in the U.S. in violation of immigration laws is not by itself a criminal offense.¹⁵ Although Flock’s policies prohibit federal agencies from using its data for immigration enforcement, in practice no effective safeguards exist, since the company reportedly refuses to remove law enforcement agencies from Flock’s network or cancel contracts in the event of violations.¹⁶

Although the Department of Justice (DOJ) has historically allowed federal law enforcement agencies to utilize automatic license plate readers in investigations, DOJ has also expressed concern with the way such technology could be used to intrude on law-abiding citizens. For example, in 2017, during President Trump’s first term, DOJ published guidance emphasizing that while law enforcement and related justice enforcement entities increasingly rely on automatic license plate reader technology, “individual privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties must also be vigorously protected.”¹⁷ Using Flock data to track and surveil immigrants in violation of Flock’s own policies is a clear failure to vigorously protect individual privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Since the Supreme Court’s 2022 decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the Committee has launched several investigations into how companies are tracking, maintaining, and protecting sensitive health data. In 2022, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi and other Democratic members of the Committee sent letters to five data broker companies and five personal health app companies requesting information regarding how they store and manage user data and whether they sell or share that data with third parties. Further, as the administration escalates a campaign of mass deportation which has denied due process to innocent people, concerns about the use and abuse of data by law enforcement agencies become significantly more pressing.

To ensure that the public at large cannot be tracked without their knowledge or consent by potentially unaccountable and hostile officials, we request a briefing by September 8, 2025, and the following information and documents from Flock by August 20, 2025:

1. Flock’s policies and procedures regarding the collection and storage of data obtained using automatic license plate reader technology, including but not

¹⁵ *The Feds’ Hidden Immigration Weapon: Virginia’s Surveillance Network*, VPM (July 7, 2025) (online at www.vpm.org/news/2025-07-07/vcij-immigration-enforcement-flock-safety-license-plate-readers-poggenklass); American Civil Liberties Union, *Issue Brief: Criminalizing Undocumented Immigrants* (Feb. 2010) (online at www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/FINAL_criminalizing_undocumented_immigrants_issue_brief_PUBLIC_VERSION.pdf); American Immigration Council, *Prosecuting People for Coming to the United States* (Aug. 23, 2021) (online at www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/immigration-prosecutions/).

¹⁶ *Id.*; see e.g., Flock Safety, *Fairfax City VA PD Transparency Portal* (July 23, 2025) (online at <https://transparency.flocksafety.com/fairfax-city-va-pd>).

¹⁷ Department of Justice, *License Plate Reader Policy Development Template for Use in Intelligence and Investigative Activities* (2017) (online at www.ojp.gov/library/publications/license-plate-reader-policy-development-template-use-intelligence-and).

limited to how and when law enforcement and other third-party entities can access that data and whether Flock requires a warrant or court order;

2. An accounting of all National Lookup searches that contain any of the following words, including the date of the search, the location of the search, the collection location for data accessed as part of that search, and the originating entity of the search:
 - a. Abortion;
 - b. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or ICE;
 - c. Customs and Border Protection or CBP;
3. Any contracts between Flock and ICE, including any amendments or subsequent versions;
4. A detailed description of what information must be provided in order for Flock to respond to data queries, including whether the requester must provide specific license plate data or can provide more general information (e.g. state of license plate issuance);
5. A detailed description of license plate data uses prohibited by Flock policies, including:
 - a. How many times Flock has blocked a data request because the reason provided for requesting that data indicated the data would be used for a prohibited purpose;
 - b. How requesters of Flock data enter the reason for their request, and whether this is an open field or a drop-down menu;
6. A detailed description and any relevant documents regarding any steps Flock has taken since June 1, 2025, to update or reassess its features, policies, or procedures to mitigate the risks listed in Flock's "Ethical Creed," which include¹⁸:
 - a. illegality;
 - b. inaccurate results;
 - c. subjective results;
 - d. misuse and abuse;

¹⁸ Flock Safety, *Flock Safety Ethical Creed* (online at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1oR8IAgNjTVniGND6S9dU01ot92cn-bLgQARzO1Ax-o8/edit?slide=id.g2dce8ab55f0_1_1866#slide=id.g2dce8ab55f0_1_1866) (accessed July 23, 2025).

- e. disparate impact on historically marginalized groups;
 - f. infringement on constitutionally protected rights; and
7. A detailed description and any relevant documents regarding any steps Flock has taken since June 1, 2025, to update or reassess its features, policies, or procedures applicable to its National Lookup program to mitigate risks listed in Flock's "Ethical Creed," which include¹⁹:
- a. illegality;
 - b. inaccurate results;
 - c. subjective results;
 - d. misuse and abuse;
 - e. disparate impact on historically marginalized groups;
 - f. infringement on constitutionally protected rights; and
8. All documents and communications from June 1, 2025, to the present between Flock and any law enforcement agency that participates in the National Lookup program.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Care and
Financial Services

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

The Honorable Glenn Grothman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

¹⁹ *Id.*