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NEWS: Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez, Merkley Unveil Ban Flock Act to Protect Americans' Right to Privacy

October 2, 2026

WASHINGTON, Oct. 2 — Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) today released the Ban Flock Act, legislation to put an end to the rise in AI-powered surveillance cameras that track Americans across the country. The Ban Flock Act would prohibit federal agencies from using automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) and block federal funding from state and local governments that use this technology.

"At a time of growing concern about the unchecked power of artificial intelligence, Flock is eviscerating the very notion of privacy by installing tens of thousands of cameras in communities across America without their consent," **Sanders said**. "Going to the doctor? Flock knows. Dropping your kid off at school? Flock is tracking you. Flock is always watching. We cannot allow America to become a surveillance state where a handful of AI oligarchs profit by giving the government the power to track our every movement."

"Across the country, Big Tech companies like Flock Safety have built a mass surveillance system to harvest Americans' private and personal data without their consent. AI-powered cameras are keeping track of our every move and weaponizing this data against working people to make record profits. The widespread integration of this technology into American society is unconscionable," **Ocasio-Cortez said**. "I am proud to introduce the Ban Flock Act with Senator Sanders to enforce our constitutional right to privacy and protect Americans from both corporate and government surveillance."

"Your right to privacy includes the freedom to move around your community without every move being monitored," **Merkley said**. "Right now, Flock is selling its cameras nationwide, laying the groundwork for a surveillance state while enriching corporate executives. No one should have this unchecked surveillance power at their fingertips, which is why I'm teaming up with Senator Sanders to rein in this dangerous technology."

Flock is the largest vendor of automatic license plate readers in the United States, with more than 120,000 cameras across the country that scan and record 20 billion vehicles every month. Newer Flock cameras do not just record vehicles — they record people. Flock's AI system can combine images of you and your vehicle with databases of phone

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numbers, relatives and court records to find out who you are, where you're going and why. The company also operates a national lookup tool, so agencies that contract with Flock can access data generated by cameras in another city or state. The national lookup tool searches can turn up massive amounts of information, including physical descriptions, records of an individual's online accounts and lists of their relatives.

The mass surveillance capabilities enabled by Flock and other automatic license plate reader companies have threatened the civil liberties of everyday Americans:

- Flock has shared state information with federal immigration officials;
- Law enforcement officials have pulled Flock data to investigate activists and logged searches corresponding to protests against ICE raids, in support of Palestinian rights and for 'No Kings' demonstrations; and
- Officers have used plate readers to track wives, girlfriends, exes and women they wanted to meet without their consent.

So far this year, at least 56 municipalities have deactivated, cancelled, or rejected contracts with Flock. Congress must act to stop the mass surveillance of citizens.

The Ban Flock Act would do this by:

- Prohibiting the federal government from using automatic license plate readers or accessing the information they collect;
- Stopping federal grant funding from flowing to state or local governments that use automatic license plate readers or contract with automatic license plate readers companies;
- Allowing Americans to sue the federal government for violation of their rights through the use of automatic license plate readers.

Read the text of the bill [here](#).

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Office Locations

Washington D.C.

U.S. Senate
332 Dirksen Building,
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-5141
Fax: 202-228-0776

Burlington

1 Church St.
3rd Floor,
Burlington, VT 05401
Toll-free: 800-339-9834
Phone: 802-862-0697
Fax: 802-860-6370

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