

Chair Shields, members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing Senate Bill 1522.

This bill comes at a pivotal time in our country. On a national, and even international scale, the increasing use of mass surveillance technology has prompted some very important questions: What threat to democracy and individual liberty does this indiscriminate surveillance have? And what protections must exist for the privacy of ordinary citizens? Now more than ever, it is critical to consider the role that we, as state policymakers, have in protecting and strengthening every Oregonian's right to privacy.

A core principle in our society is that the government does not invade people's privacy and collect information about a citizen's activities just in case they do something wrong. We are innocent until proven guilty, not the other way around. SB 1522 will place reasonable restrictions on the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of information gathered using Automatic License Plate Readers. There are legitimate uses for this type of surveillance technology, provided clear limitations are established to protect the personal data of innocent citizens. This bill will not prevent the use of ALPRs as a tool for law enforcement, it simply aligns their use with our basic constitutional principles.

In other states, we have seen the dangers of allowing this type of information to be gathered and shared without sideboards or retention policies. In New York, police used license plate reader technology to track individuals within the Muslim community without any evidence of prior criminal activity. In Massachusetts, one ALPR grant requires all captured data, regardless of whether it is associated with a crime, be submitted to the state criminal justice database making it vulnerable to potential data-mining, as well as insecure third-party sharing.

It is up to the legislature to create sensible guidelines that protect the records of innocent citizens' daily movements from indiscriminate intrusion by the government. SB 1522 is a modest bill that takes a reasonable approach to these issues. It does not ban any surveillance technology, but instead provides for a clear, consistent approach to statewide privacy protection.

Thank you for holding a hearing on this important issue.