



PRESS RELEASE

Illinois Sheriffs' Association

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Clarifying Facts on Flock Safety Technology: Protecting Public Safety While Respecting Privacy

Springfield, IL – Imagine bullets ripping through a family home, one lodging directly above a child's bed. For State Senator Meg Loughran Cappel and her Shorewood neighbors, this nightmare became reality in September 2025. Thanks to Flock Safety license plate reader technology, investigators identified the suspect's vehicle and solved the case in just 12 hours. In an interview with ABC7 Chicago's I-Team in March 2026, Shorewood Police Chief Phillip Arnold was clear: without Flock, "Absolutely not. No doubt" the crime would have dragged on much longer, if solved at all.

This rapid resolution brought swift answers and accountability to terrified families. Yet, despite such proven successes, Illinois Gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey and others are pushing to ban or severely restrict law enforcement's access to this life-saving technology. If successful, such restrictions would handcuff Illinois sheriffs and police departments, leaving violent crimes unsolved, stolen vehicles unrecovered, and communities more vulnerable.

"This technology allows Sheriff's Offices to meet the high expectations of a 21st century law enforcement agency set by our communities," said Jim Kaitschuk, Executive Director of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association. "By utilizing the latest technology, we can expedite criminal investigations that once required hours of legwork to even generate a lead. This resource helps us more quickly solve violent crimes, reducing the opportunity for other community members to become victims themselves."

How Flock Safety Actually Works

Contrary to claims of building a permanent “record of where you’ve been,” Flock Safety cameras do not track individuals or create ongoing surveillance profiles. Installed at fixed locations on public roadways, these solar-powered systems capture still images of passing vehicles, focusing primarily on license plates, along with basic details like vehicle make, model, and color.

- Data is automatically checked against law enforcement “hot lists” (stolen vehicles, Amber Alerts, wanted suspects).
- Matches generate real-time alerts to officers.
- All data is retained for only 30 days in most implementations, with strict audit logs tracking every search.
- Use is limited to legitimate criminal investigations, consistent with court rulings that such public-view technology does not violate the Fourth Amendment.

Flock does not follow your every move. It provides point-in-time information on public roads, the same spaces where law enforcement has always had the right to observe. This targeted approach has helped solve homicides, recover missing children, disrupt crime rings, and return stolen property across Illinois, where hundreds of agencies already rely on it.

Law-abiding citizens have nothing to fear. The real threat is to public safety if this valuable tool is removed at a time when communities expect smarter, faster policing. The Illinois Sheriffs’ Association urges lawmakers to reject any blanket prohibition in the upcoming legislative session. Illinois families deserve solutions that work, not policies that tie the hands of those sworn to protect them.

For more information on Flock Safety’s role in keeping Illinois safe, contact your local sheriff’s office or the ISA.

About the Illinois Sheriffs' Association

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association represents the 102 elected sheriffs across the state, advocating for effective law enforcement, public safety policies, and support for those who serve our communities.

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