

# ACLU Gets Its Knickers in a Knot Over License Plate Tracking but for All the Wrong Reasons

March 13, 2019 - The ACLU is upset about license plate readers. These are essentially a network of cameras around the country that snap pictures of license plates and then store that data in massive databases. These databases can be used by both the private sector and the government - normally meaning law enforcement - to track the comings and goings of pretty much everyone in the United States. Not great for anyone who values personal privacy.

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Over the years, we've raised more than one red flag as a result of tracking technologies. In fact, as far back as 2012 we warned our readers about this specific technology and its downsides, and we've published several other articles since. We believe that people have a right to personal and financial privacy regardless of what the government might think.

Our position is that tracking of individuals movements around the country is now completely out of control and should be reined in. But that isn't what the ACLU is complaining about. In fact, based on their public statements as published in the Washington Post, they don't really seem to have an issue with the government using license plate tracking to follow Americans. Their complaint is that ICE is using the technology to track illegal aliens.

Very frankly, their priorities in this are screwed up! Americans should have the right to move about the country freely and without any government tracking. If you want to get in your car tomorrow morning so that you can be in Vegas by noon, it is really none of the government's business and they shouldn't be able to track your exact route to get there unless you give them permission. But when someone commits a crimeâ€”and that includes entering the country illegallyâ€”they shouldn't have any expectation of privacy. If they get caught, that's a risk they took upon themselves when they broke the law in the first place.

The bottom line here is that we don't like the use license plate readers or any other tracking technology when it's applied to law abiding citizens. And that position is the same whether or not the database being used belongs to the government or is in the private sector. At some point, it is our hope that the federal government will come up with regulations on how these technologies can be used.

On the other hand, as long as these databases are being used, using them to find and arrest criminals seems like something in the public interest. And if the government ever does get its act together on regulating these technologies, we

would hope that they would provide certain carve-outs to allow ICE and other law enforcement agencies to use them to enforce our laws. That simply seems like common sense.

byJim Malmberg

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