



Date: April 22, 2026

To: Chair Lightner and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Rachel Richards, Fiscal Policy & Government Relations Director, Michigan League for Public Policy

Subject: Support for HB 5492-5493 (Wozniak, Wilson Jr.) – ALPR Data Regulation

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The Michigan League for Public Policy is pleased to support House Bills 5492-5493 (Wozniak, Wilson Jr.), which set common-sense guardrails that will clarify when and how data collected from automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) can be used across the state.

The League is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that promotes economic opportunity for all and analyzes the impact of public policy and budget decisions on the lives of Michiganders who have been systemically left out of prosperity. The League is also the state's Kids Count organization, working as a part of a national effort to measure child well-being at the state and local levels and use that information to shape public policies and programs to improve the lives of children and their families.

ALPRs are small, high-speed cameras often mounted on police vehicles, road signs, traffic lights, bridges or other objects along streets that can photograph thousands of license plates per minute. They work by automatically photographing a car and checking the license plate number against lists to search for stolen vehicles, outstanding warrants or persons needed for ongoing investigations. Authorities are then automatically notified if a match is found.

While ALPRs can legitimately enhance law enforcement's ability to investigate possible legal infractions or criminal conduct, that ability should not jeopardize the privacy of the vast majority of law-abiding Michiganders, whose data are also captured and stored. ALPRs can serve as a form of location surveillance, recording the location, date and time of drivers that pass by. Additional information can also be captured, including the make, model and color of the vehicle, along with other identifying information, such as roof racks and bumper stickers, images of passengers and details of the surrounding area. These cameras can be mounted near sensitive locations, like places of worship and doctors' offices. Taken together, this information can be used to build a detailed picture of people's lives and track their whereabouts without a warrant, which vehicle-mounted GPS tracking requires.

Most Michiganders have no idea of the scale of this surveillance and the amount of data that is collected. In the Michigan city of Taylor alone, 50 mounted cameras, along with 27 more

Using data to educate, advocate and fight for policy solutions that undo historic and systemic racial and economic inequities to lift up Michiganders who have been left out of prosperity.

vehicle-mounted ALPRs, scanned over 9 million plates per month. ALPRs are now installed across at least 125 Michigan cities and counties and enable authorities to tap into a country-wide network of over 80,000 cameras, enabling authorities to track individuals across state lines.

With so many Michiganders affected, it is incumbent upon our state government to take steps to ensure our data is protected. While ALPRs are an emerging technology, there have already been documented instances of abuse. Investigations have found that ALPR databases have been searched for protester information, including by the Grand Rapids Police Department. In Florida, an officer used license plate reader technology to track his girlfriend's location 108 times during a seven-month period. Requiring a warrant to access these databases is crucial to protecting the data of drivers, when in Michigan's Grosse Ile, 99.92% of scans between 2016 and 2017 were of innocent drivers.

Drivers in Michigan can also be vulnerable to undue stops or arrests due to ALPR reading errors. One study in Vallejo, California, found that these cameras misidentified hits 35% to 37% of the time. A six-month investigation conducted by CBS found more than a dozen cases where ALPRs, sometimes in combination with human error, led to wrongful stops. In New Mexico, an ALPR that mistook the number 2 for the number 7 led to the handcuffing of an innocent 12-year-old girl. In Detroit, police handcuffed a mother and put her and her 2-year-old autistic child in a squad car, impounding her car for over three weeks after using ALPRs to mistakenly tie her vehicle to a shooting two miles away.

These bills provide common-sense restrictions and limitations to the use of ALPRs and the retention of data collected by ALPRs. At least sixteen states, including Florida and Alabama, have addressed either the use of ALPRs and/or the retention of data. Several states, such as Georgia, Montana, Tennessee and Utah, limit how long the data can be retained. Other states, like Oklahoma, prevent data gathered from ALPRs from being sold, and some states, including Nebraska and North Carolina, require routine audits or reporting on the use of ALPRs and the storage of associated data.

As an automotive state where so many of us spend time traveling in a car, we must uphold the fundamental right to free movement without undue surveillance, where probable cause is not established. House Bills 5492 and 5493 would help protect that right and prevent data from being leaked or abused by requiring judicial warrants to access camera information for criminal cases, limiting data retention to 14 days and providing public reporting on the use of ALPRs. We are pleased to support these bills and urge the Legislature's swift action.