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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 19-H 5042 –
RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT – SURVEILLANCE DEVICES
February 27, 2019**

The ACLU of Rhode Island strongly supports this legislation, which is an important attempt to protect our state residents' privacy in our increasingly technologically intrusive age.

When the General Assembly authorized the highway truck toll program, it included the use of automated license plate readers (ALPRs). ALPRs capture not only an individual's license plate, but record the time and GPS location of every car on the road. Unregulated, this data becomes a historical record of the movements of every car on the road, allowing for a significant invasion of every driver's privacy. At the time the toll legislation was approved, many legislators acknowledged the need to address this issue. Commendably, the state Department of Transportation adopted regulations that put strong privacy safeguards in place for implementing the law. This bill would codify those practices.

H 5042 would generally prohibit the use of ALPRs and other surveillance technology, as well as the purchase or sharing of data between private organizations or law enforcement agencies without a warrant or in exigent circumstances. Currently, no other legislative protections exist regarding the use of this technology.

The provisions in the legislation provide details on the limits to public access to the data, standards for when data recorded should be permanently deleted, and the availability of information pursuant to a warrant. The legislation also ensures that entities are prohibited from selling or trading any license plate data.

We would like to emphasize that the legislation contains a number of exemptions, including for "exigent circumstances," so police will continue to be able to obtain data when dealing with situations like amber alerts or direct threats to public safety, to give two obvious examples.

The ACLU strongly encourages this committee to support this legislation in order to codify critical privacy protections for motorists on our state highways.