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May 16, 2022

Members of the Warwick City Council
Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, RI 02886

VIA EMAIL

Dear City Councilors:

On February 23, 2022, the ACLU of Rhode Island submitted a letter to the Council in opposition to the considered implementation of deceptively named “automated license plate reader” cameras, owned and operated by Flock Safety, in your municipality. Following the Council meeting that evening, it was reported that the Council had tabled the vote to May 16th to consider a draft of a “scope of use” ordinance to be drafted by Councilor Sinapi to establish limits on the use of this intrusive technology.¹

We write again today because we noticed that the Flock Safety bid is back on the calendar for tonight’s meeting for a possible vote without, as far as we can tell, any corresponding ordinance addressing the surveillance technology’s use. We continue to urge your rejection of this system.

For your convenience, a copy of our February 23, 2022 letter, enumerating our points of opposition, is attached. We wish to strongly reiterate and emphasize the serious dangers that this technology can pose to resident privacy, First Amendment rights, and racial justice in our state. Meaningful restraints are critical to ensuring that this system does not become a ubiquitous tool of government surveillance, which can then serve to implicitly normalize more intrusive and invasive forms of law enforcement technology.

We believe this technology should be rejected summarily, but if it is to be approved in any manner, we consider it essential for the Council to enact policies that set strict limits on its use and that promote community engagement and oversight before consideration of any privacy-invasive technology systems.

Thank you again for your consideration of these concerns, and please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Brown".

Steven Brown
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Stern".

Hannah Stern
Policy Associate

¹ Council Puts “Police State” Step on May 16 Agenda, Rob Borkowski, *The Warwick Post* (February 24, 2022).