

Submitter: April South
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB238

Dear Committee Members:

As an Oregonian, I believe in the basic rights of our democracy like privacy, freedom of speech, and protest — which are under attack across the country.

Among many concerns, I am deeply concerned that Senate Bill 238A writes a blank check for law enforcement agencies to begin deploying drones as first responders and sets the stage for unlimited police drones, without a court warrant, in a wide variety of situations. I'm concerned law enforcement could use drones to monitor my activities if I attend a protest, community event, or go about my everyday life with no oversight from the courts.

Passing SB 238A would invite more invasive surveillance and harm from the Trump Administration. I am afraid of the growing power of tech giants like Palantir and how government and police technology is being used to integrate data sources and compile profiles on all of us. Surveillance technologies used by police are already being weaponized against groups that the Trump Administration and its conservative state allies are targeting.

It was recently reported that a police officer in Texas used the Flock camera system to perform a nationwide search of more than 83,000 cameras while looking for a woman who had an abortion, including cameras in Washington and Illinois where abortion is legal. Investigative journalists also uncovered that ICE used local law enforcement access to the Flock database to seek location data from all over the country for immigration enforcement.

As Trump's terrifying attacks on our communities grow, we need Oregon's lawmakers to ensure our state is leading the way in protecting our civil liberties, like speech and privacy, not going taking them away or weakening them.

This bill will not protect communities. It would put all Oregonians at risk, including protestors, abortion doctors, climate activists, people of color, immigrants, ranchers, farmers, hunters, and more.

For these reasons, I oppose Senate Bill 238A.