

Submitter:

Matthew Louie

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB238

I write in strong opposition to Senate Bill 238A, which would dangerously expand law enforcement's drone surveillance powers without adequate constitutional protections for Oregonians' privacy and civil liberties.

This bill would allow police to conduct warrantless surveillance over our homes, neighborhoods, healthcare facilities, schools, places of worship, and public gatherings. Oregon law already permits drone use with proper warrants and in genuine emergencies. SB 238A eliminates crucial judicial oversight that protects our Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches.

The bill's broad language creates dangerous potential for abuse, particularly given current federal policies targeting vulnerable communities. Police could use drones to:

- Monitor protests and political gatherings, chilling free speech
- Track individuals based on predictive policing algorithms
- Collect personal data without court authorization

This expansion comes as law enforcement increasingly integrates surveillance technologies from companies like Palantir and Flock. These systems can pool drone footage with license plate readers and other data sources to create comprehensive surveillance profiles on law-abiding Oregonians. Recent reports show such systems have already been misused to track women seeking abortions and assist federal immigration enforcement.

SB 238A is being rushed through without adequate community input or consideration of its implications during a time when federal authorities are expanding surveillance powers against dissenting voices and marginalized communities.

This surveillance expansion will disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, as well as activists and protesters who are already subjected to heightened government scrutiny.

Oregon already has balanced drone laws that protect public safety while preserving constitutional rights. Law enforcement can obtain warrants for legitimate investigations and use drones in emergencies and for search-and-rescue operations.

I urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 238A. Protect Oregonians' privacy, preserve judicial oversight, and prevent the creation of a surveillance state that threatens our democratic values and constitutional rights.

Oregon should be a sanctuary for civil liberties, not a testing ground for warrantless surveillance. Please stand with your constituents and oppose this dangerous expansion of police power.

Thank you for your consideration.