

DATA PRIVACY & GOVERNANCE HUB

Missouri Governor Signs executive order regulating Flock cameras and other ALPRs

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Key Takeaways

- Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe signed an executive order directing the development of strict safeguards for the use of ALPR technology.
- The order limits the use of ALPR technology to criminal justice and lifesaving purposes.
- The order lays the groundwork for a statewide legal framework that balances police accountability with efficiency.

What Happened

On September 14, Missouri Governor Mike Kehoe signed an [executive order](#) that regulates the use of data collected by Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology. Governor Kehoe has made it clear that this order is not intended to outlaw ALPR technology wholesale. Instead, the order protects citizens' rights by limiting how law enforcement and private vendors may use data collected by the technology.

The order enjoins several [restrictions](#) on law enforcement and technology vendors. They are both required to permanently delete most license plate and vehicle data within 30 days. Vendors are prohibited from selling, sharing, or commercializing Missouri-generated data. ALPR technology use must be limited to legitimate criminal justice and lifesaving purposes. Lastly, the order prohibits using artificial intelligence facial recognition technology with ALPR systems.

In addition to these restrictions, the order also implements [accountability measures](#) to prevent and penalize misuse. Measures include disciplinary proceedings and, when appropriate, criminal referrals.

Privacy and Governance Concerns

Clearly, the data gathered from ALPR technology has made a tremendous impact on law enforcement proceedings. Officers can detect crimes and solve cases much faster than ever before. However, cases of officers [abusing](#) the technology to harass, stalk, and spy on romantic interests have come to light in several states. These abuses involved officers using the technology beyond its intended purpose. The stalking by deviant officers is only one example of function creep. Still, it's not hard to imagine how law enforcement or private interests could infringe citizens' privacy rights by using ALPR technology to spy on the general public.

Governor Kehoe is keenly aware of such privacy concerns, [stating](#), "The unchecked collection and indefinite storage of location data belonging to law-abiding citizens raises substantial, valid constitutional and privacy concerns. The government should not be building a permanent record of where law-abiding Missourians go, who they visit, or how they live their daily lives. This executive order is the first step in creating safeguards against abuse of this data, while still understanding the benefits of these vital public safety tools for law enforcement."

Governor Kehoe's executive order takes concrete steps to mitigate the abuses mentioned above.

Why It Matters / Policy Considerations

Recently, citizens have mounted a vocal uproar over the prevalence of Flock Safety cameras and other ALPR technology. In Missouri alone, more than 3,400 Flock cameras operate. This executive order is invaluable to the Missouri government in maintaining public trust and goodwill. By establishing accountability and disciplinary measures, the order makes law enforcement's use of the technology less opaque and forbids unnecessary vendor use.

This is a great first step, but it is not the end. Governor Kehoe himself wrote this order as a [makeshift](#) defense while Missouri's Congress works to develop legislation. One major concern

is how effective disciplinary actions are against law enforcement abuses. It is reasonably foreseeable that lax enforcement of these laws within policing organizations could lead to abuses. With that in mind, the legislature should focus on defining a framework for acceptable use cases of the technology.

Beyond Missouri, this order has relevance to the entire nation. Most U.S. States [lack legislation](#) specifically addressing ALPR technology. The few states that do differ in their approaches. In this new frontier of data privacy, no standard has been developed yet. Missouri legislation could influence the country, as states without ALPR laws may look to it as a model, depending on how successful Missouri's laws are.