

**House File 2556 - Introduced**

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BY THOMSON

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the use of automatic registration plate  
2 readers, providing penalties, and including effective date  
3 provisions.  
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

2 1. Automatic registration plate readers enable persistent,  
3 indiscriminate, and suspicionless tracking of persons, including  
4 their movements, associations, habits, and locations over time.

5 2. Continuous or mass collection of location data implicates  
6 reasonable expectations of privacy under the provisions of the  
7 fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States and  
8 Article I, section 8, of the Constitution of the State of Iowa,  
9 particularly when aggregated.

10 3. The general assembly finds that bulk location surveillance  
11 without individualized suspicion is fundamentally incompatible  
12 with a free society and invites misuse, mission creep, data  
13 breaches, and political or retaliatory abuse.

14 4. Less intrusive investigative tools remain available to  
15 law enforcement officials and such tools respect constitutional  
16 limits and traditional warrant requirements.

17 5. A categorical prohibition, coupled with narrow exceptions  
18 based on warrant requirements, is the least restrictive means of  
19 protecting Iowans' privacy while preserving public safety.

20 6. Strong civil remedies, including a private right of  
21 action, are necessary to deter violations and provide meaningful  
22 relief.

23 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **321Q.1 Definitions.**

24 As used in this chapter:

25 1. "Automatic registration plate reader" or "plate reader"  
26 means any system, device, software, or service that automatically  
27 captures, analyzes, stores, or transmits images of motor vehicle  
28 registration plates or associated vehicle characteristics,  
29 including date, time, location, vehicle movement, travel  
30 patterns, or metadata, whether fixed, mobile, or cloud-based.

31 2. "Covered entity" means a state agency, political  
32 subdivision, law enforcement agency, public official, public  
33 employee, contractor, vendor, or private entity acting on behalf  
34 of or in coordination with a governmental entity.

35 3. "Department" means the state department of transportation.

1 4. "Plate reader data" means an image, record, metadata,  
2 derived data, or analytic output generated by a plate reader.

3 5. "Use" means to acquire, install, operate, access, analyze,  
4 query, share, sell, retain, or otherwise benefit from plate  
5 reader systems or plate reader data.

6 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **321Q.2 Use of plate reader**  
7 **prohibited.**

8 1. A covered entity shall not use an automatic registration  
9 plate reader for any purpose.

10 2. A covered entity shall not do any of the following:

11 a. Use, acquire, or possess plate reader equipment or  
12 services.

13 b. Contract with any private vendor for plate reader  
14 services.

15 c. Use, access, or receive plate reader data from another  
16 jurisdiction or private party.

17 d. Retain, analyze, or share plate reader data, regardless of  
18 where the data was collected.

19 3. This section preempts a local ordinance or policy  
20 authorizing and regulating the use of an automatic registration  
21 plate reader.

22 4. A covered entity that used an automatic registration plate  
23 reader before the effective date of this Act shall remove every  
24 plate reader and shall destroy all plate reader data not later  
25 than thirty days after the effective date of this Act.

26 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. **321Q.3 Private right of action.**

27 1. A person whose vehicle, movements, or data have been  
28 collected, accessed, or used in violation of section 321Q.2  
29 has standing to sue the covered entity who used an automatic  
30 registration plate reader, regardless of whether actual damages  
31 can be proven.

32 2. A covered entity that uses an automatic registration plate  
33 reader in violation of section 321Q.2 is liable for all of the  
34 following damages:

35 a. Not less than one thousand dollars per violation per day

1 or actual damages, whichever is greater.

2 b. Punitive damages for willful or reckless violations.

3 c. Injunctive and declaratory relief.

4 d. Plaintiff's attorney fees and costs.

5 3. Sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, and qualified  
6 immunity are waived for purposes of actions brought under this  
7 section.

8 4. Actions may be brought in state district court, with venue  
9 where the plaintiff resides or where the violation occurred.

10 5. This section applies to actions involving plate reader use  
11 and data retention brought on or after the effective date of  
12 this Act, including actions based on the use or retention of data  
13 collected before the effective date of this Act.

14 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. **321Q.4 Exclusion and suppression.**

15 Evidence derived directly or indirectly from an automatic  
16 registration plate reader, including derivative evidence,  
17 is inadmissible in any criminal, civil, or administrative  
18 proceeding, except when offered by a plaintiff as evidence that  
19 a violation of this chapter occurred.

20 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. **321Q.5 Enforcement and civil**  
21 **penalties.**

22 1. A covered entity that violates section 321Q.2 is subject  
23 to a civil penalty of not less than ten thousand dollars per  
24 violation, to be collected by the department and deposited in the  
25 road use tax fund.

26 2. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
27 providing for escalating penalties for repeated violations.

28 3. A person who knowingly uses or authorizes unlawful use  
29 of a plate reader by a covered entity is personally liable for  
30 penalties under this section.

31 4. The attorney general may bring actions against a private  
32 entity or person for violating section 321Q.2 and such action  
33 shall not preempt an action brought by a person other than the  
34 attorney general.

35 Sec. 7. REPEAL. Section 321P.4, Code 2026, is repealed.



1 provisions and civil penalties. A person who knowingly uses or  
2 authorizes unlawful use of a plate reader by a covered entity is  
3 personally liable for penalties under the bill, and the attorney  
4 general may bring actions against such persons.

5 The bill takes effect upon enactment.

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