In 2023 the Legislature passed SB 224, the Deputy Darren Almendarez Act, to punish catalytic-converter theft and to add one dollar to the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention fee on every auto insurance policy.

The Senate vote was 31–0.

The House vote was 142–0.

The Governor signed it.

The bill does not mention Flock, automatic license-plate readers, or a statewide camera grid.

A board appointed largely by the Governor then used tens of millions of that fee to put Flock cameras on Texas roads.

That is the bottom line.

The authors have since said cameras were never discussed. That may be true of the debate. It does not change how the money was spent. Policyholders are paying for it.

That is not how a limited government is supposed to work. If the fee was for converter theft, the statute should have said so in words a citizen can read.

If the state wanted a camera network, that should have been a separate bill, debated as a search-and-seizure question, not tucked into an insurance line.

The 2026 Republican Party of Texas platform is not silent on this.

Delegates adopted Plank 55, which calls on the Legislature to prohibit the use, installation, operation, and data sharing of automated license-plate readers, including Flock Safety cameras, TxDOT tracking cameras, and similar systems used by any state or local government. Existing systems are to be removed. Vehicle-tracking data is not to be collected, retained, or shared without a warrant based on probable cause.

Plank 168 opposes warrantless government surveillance, in all forms and at all levels, of United States citizens and businesses.

As a Republican Precinct Chairman in Freestone County. I vote with this party. I also expect this party, when it holds the House, the Senate, the Lieutenant Governor's office, and the Governor's office, to honor the platform the convention wrote and to watch the funds it creates.

Intent is not a substitute for a fence around the dollar.

Governor Abbott has told state agencies not to spend on Flock.

He should pledge to Texans that the hold stays in force until the next legislative session passes a bill, with the Lieutenant Governor's support, that does three things:

1. Fences the MVCPA fee so it cannot buy automatic license-plate networks;

2. Requires a warrant or a published local use-and-retention policy before any state or grant-funded reader goes live, consistent with Planks 55 and 168; and

3. Publishes every MVCPA award that purchased cameras — agency, vendor, and dollar amount.

A pause without a statute is only a pause.

Freestone County is not Austin. The Commissioners Court and the Sheriff should say, in writing, whether this county owns or queries Flock or any similar system, what money paid for it if it exists, how long the data is kept, and what happens if it is misused.

Law enforcement needs tools.

Citizens need to know the rules.

Those two things are not enemies.

I am for the Sheriff and for the men and women who wear the badge. I am also for the Fourth Amendment and for a Legislature that writes what it means.

Rural Texas can hold both.