47 North 5th Street, Hudson, N.Y. 12534
Phone: (518) 303-3848
Email: info@sanctuarycolumbiacounty.org
Website: www.sanctuarycolumbiacounty.org

Dear Esteemed Members of Assembly Standing Committees on Consumer Affairs and Protection, Governmental Operations and Local Governments,

My name is Bryan MacCormack. I was born and raised in Columbia County, New York. I am one of the co-founders and Co-Executive director of Columbia County Sanctuary Movement.

In just a few short years, cameras driven by artificial intelligence have aggregated billions of images of every day New Yorkers. Across the nation, Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) have been used to track women seeking medical care, surveillance civilians exercising their first amendment rights, stalk romantic partners of law enforcement agents and fuel warrant-less arrests of immigrants by ICE. While these facts are widely known, and in some cases grounded in local experiences, my written testimony focuses on the nuances of how the Division of Criminal Justice Services of the State of New York is responsible for the proliferation of these technologies.

In August of 2026, the Columbia County Board of Supervisors and public learned that the Columbia County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) installed Flock Safety ALPRs throughout the county. The revelation came as a surprise to the supervisors, who years earlier tabled a proposal in the public safety committee for their procurement. It begged the question, how did CCSO procure these cameras without the knowledge of the board of supervisors?

Each year the New York State's Division of Criminal Justice Services provides millions of dollars to local law enforcement agencies through the Law Enforcement Technology grant. This program intentionally funneled millions of dollars into the pockets of companies like Flock Safety and Axon to proliferate AI driven surveillance throughout the state.

Whatsmore, the LETECH grant has been used unintentionally and intentionally to procure ALPRs without the consent, knowledge or oversight of local legislative bodies. This is the case in Columbia County and in the Town of Greenport.

While the most conservative states in the country, such as Florida and Texas, are banning the use of state funding for ALPRs and outlawing their use on state highways, New York continues to use our tax dollars to proliferate their use.

However, communities throughout the state and across the political spectrum are uniting to defend their privacy, civil liberties and neighbors. Over the last three months alone, Dutchess, Ulster and Orange county have banned the use of Flock and ALPRs. Dozens of other jurisdictions have canceled their contracts, refused to renew contracts, and passed full bans.

Consumer must be protected from unwarranted surveillance. Local legislatures must retain their authority to operate and govern their jurisdictions with integrity and transparency. It is long overdue for New York State to stop funding the proliferation of ALPRs and the egregious violations of our rights and civil liberties they have enabled. I strongly encourage legislators participating in these hearings to advocate for a full ban on ALPRs across the state of New York.

Sincerely,
Bryan MacCormack
Co-Executive Director
Columbia County Sanctuary Movement