



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 29, 2014

## Victory for Liberty: N.C. State Rep Kills License Plate Tracking Bill

Chalk up a victory for liberty and for the Fourth Amendment!

Last week, North Carolina state representative John Faircloth removed a controversial license plate tracking bill from the General Assembly's calendar. According to local media, the measure — HB 348 — will sit stagnant in a state senate committee and will not be brought back up this legislative session.



Faircloth was the bill's primary sponsor, and although it passed the state house of representatives, constitutionalists and civil libertarians raised a ruckus that effectively killed the measure.

The (Raleigh) *Times-News* reports on the bill's demise:

Faircloth said he decided to pull the bill from the calendar after concerns were raised over the technology that would have been used to photograph drivers' license plates. Some of those concerns were voiced by Alamance County residents questioning intrusive technology being used to spy on individuals without cause.

As *The New American* [reported on July 23](#), the bill would have allowed state and local law enforcement to use automatic license plate reader systems to create databases of people traveling on state roadways.

The language of the bill defined the proposed tracking devices as “a system of one or more mobile or fixed automated high-speed cameras used in combination with computer algorithms to convert images of license plates into computer-readable data.”

In very broad language, the bill authorized use of the cameras to:

any agency or officer of the State of North Carolina or any political subdivision thereof who is empowered by the laws of this State to conduct investigations or to make arrests, and any attorney, including the Attorney General of North Carolina, authorized by the laws of this State to prosecute or participate in the prosecution of those persons arrested or persons who may be subject to civil actions related to or concerning an arrest.

Faircloth, predictably, pointed to the cameras' potential use in “study[ing] traffic patterns” and helping during Amber Alerts. He admitted, however, that had the devices been installed they would have “take[n] pictures of drivers' license plates as they drove past.”

In the end, it was this “privacy issue” that scuttled the legislation. Faircloth reportedly will not reintroduce the bill and will allow it to languish in committee.

The *Times-News* reported, though, that there were others who backed the installation of license plate tracking technology along the roadways of the Tarheel State:

State Rep. Steve Ross, R-Alamance, was among those in the House who supported the bill. Ross



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said he believed the cameras would have been placed on the on- and off-ramps to interstates across North Carolina, including in the Burlington area.

Ross said the cameras would have been “tag readers” identifying license plate numbers. The DOT would have used the data to study traffic patterns to determine how to better handle traffic congestion, Ross said. The bill “had no problem” passing the state House, he said.

Ross said he understood there were “a lot of conspiracy theories” about how the cameras could have been used. Ross said the cameras would have provided a safety feature allowing the State Highway Patrol the ability to track fugitives.

State Senator Rick Gunn told the *Times-News* that he believed that the bill “became more than what it was intended to be.”

Unless, of course, the intent was to increase the size of the American surveillance state and encompass more citizens within its ever-heightening walls.

In the end, although he “supported law enforcement being able to do its job,” Gunn agreed with Faircloth’s decision to remove the bill from the legislative calendar.

This whole episode raises questions about the proper job of law enforcement. More and more, it seems, police are being trained and equipped to behave like soldiers rather than peace officers. Rather than protecting and defending, cops are injuring and falsely accusing. All of this unfortunate transformation is aided by a federal government all too willing to give billions in grant money and used military equipment to local law enforcement agencies in exchange for additional federal-local “cooperation.”

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