

# Legislative Activism in the ATmosphere and the Fediverse March 2, 2026

Jon Pincus  
@jdp23@neuromatch.social  
@jdp23.thenexus.today

Slides downloadable at  
[thenexusofprivacy.net/data/un-workshop-0302.pdf](https://thenexusofprivacy.net/data/un-workshop-0302.pdf)

# Theory of change

- Organizing, activism, and mutual aid are important to a lot of people
- Big tech social networks are hostile places for all of these - especially for marginalized people
- There's an opportunity here

# Legislative activism 101

- Goals:
  - Pass good legislation
  - Improve and pass legislation that could be good
  - Block bad legislation

# There are a few ways to approach legislative activism

- Persuading legislators
  - Help them understand complex issues and learn to see through lobbyist spin
  - Meetings, phone and email, testimony, “one-pagers”, sharing info,...
  - Propose and/or support specific improvements
  - Typically a lot of behind the scenes work here
- Pressuring legislators
  - Getting people and organizations to contact legislators with the messages you want them to send
  - Getting people on your side to spread the word – and convince others to get involved
- Influencing media coverage
  - Encourage journalists to write the kinds of stories you want to see
  - Amplify media coverage that makes the points you want (and share with legislators)
  - Neutralize unfortunate media articles (hit pieces, spin, etc)

# Case studies: Washington state 2026

- Age verification legislation: three bad bills
  - HB 2112, “sexual material harmful to minors” (based on Texas ‘ HB 1175)
  - HB 6111, social media (based on Mississippi’s HB 1126))
  - HB 1834, “addictive feeds” (based on California’s SB 976, subject of *Netchoice v. Bonta*)
    - The Attorney General was pushing this bill very heavily
- AI bills, including HB 2599 (regulating AI in therapy)
- SB 6002, the Driver Privacy Act (Flock / ALPR regulation)
- Grassroots privacy activists work with WA People’s Privacy, ACLU of Washington, LGBTQ+ orgs like Gender Justice League, progressive activists like Indivisible, local DeFlock organizers, ...
  - Also national organizations like EFF, Fight For the Future, etc, but they can’t help all that much
- We have a very short legislative session here (60 days!) so it’s all-consuming

# Lots of interest in these issues on social media

- People in the ATmosphere and fedi are in general a good audience
  - Many are against surveillance and big tech, pro-LGBTQIA2S+
  - Lots of libertarians, progressives, anarchists
  - Bluesky is doing age verification and people hate it, so there's lots of awareness
  - Many experts in AI, coming from critical perspectives
- A lot of relevant organizers have accounts there
  - Age verification: Fight, EFF, ACLU, Free Press Coalition, Mike Masnick, ...
  - ALPR in Washington: [Stop Surveillance City](#), [ACLU of Washington](#), [Pro Choice Washington](#), [Deflock Redmond](#), [Washington Privacy Organizers](#)
  - AI: DAIR Institute folks, researchers, ...

# Feeds, channels, hashtags can very helpful

- [KOSA/Bad Internet Bills](#) and [Flock/ALPRs](#) in the ATmosphere
  - Created these using Graze with simple keyword / regex includes and excludes
- Newsmast's [Age Verification](#) and [Vehicle Plates](#) channels in fedi
- #waleg (Washington Legislature) as well as #KOSA, #Flock, #ALPRs, etc

A big challenge in both ecosystems: how do people who don't already know about these find them?

A few examples of successes



## Washington Privacy Organizers @wa-privacy.net · 1d

A great example of one of our major concerns about SB 6002, the bill regulating Flock and other ALPRs. Weak "guardrails" don't protect us, but \*do\* give an for cities to turn the cameras back on -- and undercut local organizing in cities that haven't turned off the cameras yet.

#waleg



**DeFlock Redmond** @deflock-redmond.bsky.social · 1d



On Tuesday March 10, in the 19:00 session a 90 minute "Police Technology Update" will see Chief Lowe ignore community push-back & seek to reinstate the #ALPR mass #surveillance program under the cover of SB 6002!

He will also be raising ALPR tech mounted to police vehicles as an alternative!

1/4

#### 4. AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER (ALPR) TECHNOLOGY

##### Understanding the Full ALPR Landscape

- The department operates or oversees three distinct categories of ALPR technology. These must be understood separately, as they serve different purposes, operate under different legal frameworks, and carry different community implications. Council's suspension applies specifically to the investigative fixed-camera system.

System	Purpose	Mechanism	Current Status
<b>Investigative Fixed ALPR (Flock Safety)</b>	Detect vehicles linked to crimes, stolen vehicles, and missing persons citywide 24/7.	Fixed cameras at strategic city locations always-on coverage independent of officer deployment.	<b>SUSPENDED</b> - pending Council direction.
<b>Mobile ALPR (In-Car Camera)</b>	Detect wanted vehicles during patrol opportunistic coverage dependent on officer routing.	Mounted on patrol vehicles active only when car is present at same location as target vehicle.	Available as an alternative, not currently deployed.

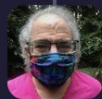
#### 5 vs. Mobile ALPR: Why Fixed Infrastructure is the More Effective Tool

Council should be aware that mobile ALPR technology camera systems mounted on patrol vehicles exists as alternative to the fixed Flock Safety infrastructure currently suspended. After careful evaluation, the department does not recommend mobile ALPR as a substitute. The reasons are operational and grounded in the department evaluative framework of problem-solving and efficiency:

- Coverage dependency:** Mobile ALPR can only detect a wanted vehicle if a patrol car happens to be in the same location at the same time. Fixed cameras provide continuous, citywide coverage 24 hours a day, regardless of officer deployment patterns.
- Reactive vs. proactive value:** Fixed systems alert officers when a wanted vehicle enters a monitored area allowing rapid, targeted response. Mobile systems capture plates passively during routine patrol an officer may drive past a wanted vehicle without any alert if the system is not actively querying that specific plate that moment.
- Resource efficiency:** Fixed infrastructure generates alerts without requiring an officer to be present. Mobile ALPR consumes officer time and patrol resources while delivering narrower and less reliable coverage.
- Investigative gap:** A wanted vehicle associated with a felony investigation may sit in a residential neighborhood for days without a patrol car passing. Fixed cameras at key corridors capture that vehicle the moment it moves. Mobile ALPR would miss it entirely unless an officer happened to be on the same block.

In short: mobile ALPR relies on coincidence. Fixed ALPR relies on infrastructure. For a department seeking efficiency and effectiveness, fixed infrastructure is the operationally superior choice. The department

ALT



Jon

@jdp23

EN

Since I have everybody on the line here ... this is an action on the state bill regulating Flock that we're not blasting out widely so I'm doing this as a DM. But if any of you get a chance to do this tonight or tomorrow it would be greatly appreciated. We're working with ACLU et al on this bill but they are involved in soooo many issues that they're stretched very thin, this is an area where grassroots activism can really complement their efforts. Also I am trying to make the case that fedi is a great place for privacy and civil liberties activism, so it's doubly useful if at least one of you can do this!

[takeaction.network/xactions/46...](https://takeaction.network/xactions/46...)

(And please let me know if the action's confusing or there's additional information that's needed.)

@redacted @redacted @redacted @redacted @redacted



Take Action Network

**SB 6002 (regulating Flock and other ALPRs): ...**

The Driver Privacy Act regulates Automated license plate reade...

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Feb 2



**Washington Privacy Organizers** @wa-privacy.net · 15d

really appreciate your updates! A quick question: does the three-minute rule apply to Night Floor tonight?



**State Representative Julia Reed** @staterepjuliareed.bsky.social · 15d

Yes, the 3-minute rule applies to all floor debates until the end of session now. But you have no idea how long 3 minutes can be until you've been a state rep. [#waleg](#)





Miami Tech Enthusiast Club 

@mtec@mastodon.social

Join us on Wed, Jan 21 at 7:30 PM EST for our next virtual social hour!

We'll start the discussion with the topic of calling our elected representatives and then expand to anything else we want to chat about. :)

[miamitech.club/events/](https://miamitech.club/events/)

#Miami

#Florida

#Tech

...and 3 more



Washington Privacy Organizers

@waprivacy

 Jan 23

[@mtec](#) how did this go? we should connect and compare-and-contrast tometime!



**Jon P**

@jdp23.thenexus.today



blacksky.app



He

There's a bill here in Washington (HB 2599) to regulate AI use in therapy. Here's the current language of one key section. A couple questions:

- 1) what else should be prohibited?
- 2) is there better wording for (c)? More about my concern here in the reply

...

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8      (1) A licensed professional may not use artificial intelligence
9      in such a way that allows it to do any of the following:
10     (a) Make independent therapeutic decisions;
11     (b) Directly interact with clients in any form of therapeutic
12     communication;
13     (c) Generate therapeutic recommendations or treatment plans
14     without review and approval by the licensed professional; or
15     (d) Detect emotions or mental states of clients.
```

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10:44 AM · Jan 26, 2026 Everybody can reply ▾



**Jon P**

@jdp23.thenexus.today



blacksky.app



He

Here's a draft of what I'm thinking of saying about this issue in the hearing on HB 2599 (AI in therapy), which starts at 1:30) ... I probably will only have 90 seconds so can't go into detail. If you happen to see it before then, any thoughts?

Or anybody else, feedback very welcome!

The need for regulation is clear. Developers of ChatGPT and other AI chatbots prey on people with mental health issues by misleadingly implying their bots are therapists. And, as more and more therapists use AI as part of their work, guardrails are vital.

The bill prohibits a handful of especially dangerous practices like allowing AI software to make independent therapeutic decisions.



Washington Privacy Organizers

@waprivacy@pnw.zone

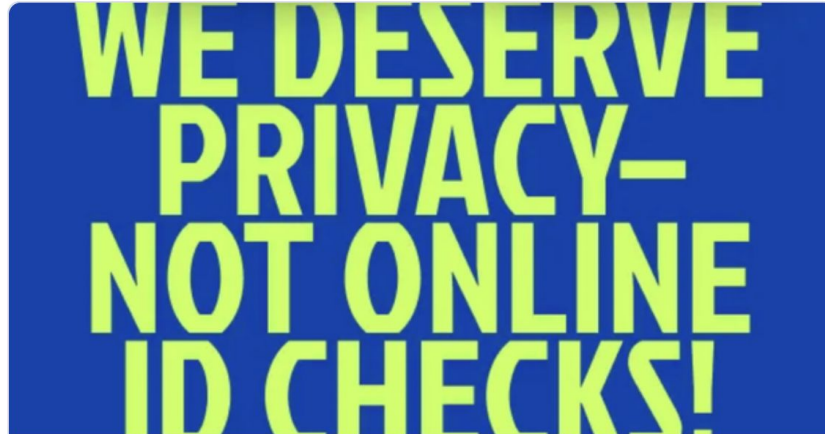
[#waleg](#) update: the House still hasn't voted on HB 1834, which would require age verification for access to "addictive feeds" on social networks -- but leadership is trying to push it through.

UPDATE 2/16: Great news the Attorney General's Office just sent out mail saying they're going to put the bill down for the year and not try to pass it this session -- exactly what we were asking for!

🌟 HUZAZH!!!! 🌟

Thanks everybody for your activism on this!!!!

[takeaction.network/xactions/47...](https://takeaction.network/xactions/47...)



The perfect storm that didn't happen



**Jon P**

@jdp23.thenexus.today



bluesky.app



He

If HB 1834 passes, will Bluesky start age-verifying access to "addictive feeds" for Washington state residents? If so, which feeds will be considered addictive?

Good questions.

UPDATE: they're not going to try to pass the bill this session, so these questions are now hypothetical!

A thread ...

# Barriers – and workarounds

- Still not a lot of people here!
  - Actions get tens of responses, vs hundreds or thousands on Reddit and Insta
  - Very difficult to convince people or orgs to invest time
  - Workaround: focus more on 1-1 contacts than broad pressure
- High-profile platforms (Bluesky and Mastodon) have bad reputations
  - Racism (especially anti-Blackness) on both, anti-LGBTQ environment on Bluesky
  - Workaround: use Blacksky and emphasize pnw.zone instead of Mastodon
- Most influencers and high-profile devs don't act like they care about these issues
  - Workaround: use platforms where they do care
    - Blacksky, fedi instances with sympathetic admins
    - mo-me and Bonfire are making progress

# Usability and functionality gaps

- We all know the usability problems ...
  - More positively, mo-me's channels improve onboarding
- Feed discoverability is a huge barrier
- Lack of private discussions (beyond 1-1 DMs) on Bluesky and vanilla Mastodon
  - Local-only posts (Glitch, Hometown, GoToSocial, Bonfire, and soon Blacksky) help
  - What's really needed is some equivalent to Facebook groups
- Short posts and lack of formatting get in the way
  - Glitch, Hometown, GoToSocial, Bonfire are all better here

# Up next: build on what we've done

- Local level fights against Flock and other ALPRs
  - Not just in Washington! How to network more broadly?
- Similar legislative battles in states across the country
- Congress
  - FISA reauthorization deadline: 4/20
  - KOSA and “Bad Internet Bills” are lurking
  - AI legislation?

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