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Flock Legal Chief Cites Uphill Battle To Ease Lawmakers' Fears

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Summary by Bloomberg AI

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- Dan Haley, Flock's chief legal officer, said the scrutiny of the company's license plate readers came harder and faster than he expected, with congressional probes, lawsuits, and cities rupturing their contracts.
- Flock has unveiled new privacy safeguards, including shortening how long information is retained and restricting customers' searches of data, in an effort to counter the growing narrative that its cameras are invasive.
- Haley said the company's efforts to win over policymakers have been "an uphill battle," with concerns about government overreach, surveillance, and data, and that he has been busy growing his legal department and sharpening ties with Washington.

Dan Haley's soon-to-be boss warned him a little over a year ago: Taking the helm of the legal department at Flock Safety – maker of license plate readers facing a growing, national backlash over their potential use for mass surveillance – would come with unique scrutiny.

"The scrutiny came harder and faster than I expected," Haley, now Flock's chief legal officer, said in a recent interview with Bloomberg Law.

Congressional probes. A half-dozen states – including Florida, California, and Texas – either banning the systems or suing Flock users. Cities rupturing their contracts. Lawsuits alleging constitutional violations. Residents destroying Flock cameras. And a Washington hearing this week in which Sen. Josh Hawley(R-Mo.) and other lawmakers threatened legislation and subpoenas against Flock CEO Garrett Langley and executives from competitors who were no-shows at the hearing.

Haley, in an interview two weeks before that hearing, said he's been busy growing his legal department, sharpening ties with Washington, and countering the growing narrative that Flock's cameras are invasive. The company unveiled new privacy safeguards last month, committing to shorten how long information is retained, restrict customers' searches of data, and require audit logs tracking user activity.

Still, some of Flock's efforts to win over policymakers have been "an uphill battle," Haley said.

"People have concerns about government overreach, about government authority, about surveillance, about their data. All of these things are legitimate concerns," Haley said. "It's a fascinating challenge to both navigate the legal questions – which in a very weird way are the easy part of the equation right now – as opposed to the public policy part of the equation, the public perception part of the equation, the public trust part of the equation."

The Poster Child

Flock Safety has become the poster child for automatic license plate readers in the US, which can capture vehicles' make, model, and color, as well as identify people in cars and physical vehicle attributes such as damage or political bumper stickers.

Cities across the country have installed Flock's cameras, which are praised by police departments for helping them rapidly identify vehicles associated with crimes. Flock has deployed more than 120,000 cameras in 49 states and counts at least 5,000 law enforcement agencies and a thousand businesses as customers.

The private company raised a \$200 million equity round and \$300 million in venture debt at an \$8.3 billion valuation earlier this year, Bloomberg reported.

To stimulate the startup's expansion and field legal and regulatory push-back, Haley said he's grown Flock's legal team, bringing on staff with compliance, public policy, and litigation experience.

"It's been easier for me to advocate for resources because the need is self-evident," said Haley, who succeeded Mark Smith after his three-year stint as general counsel. "No CEO wants to add lawyers ever, but I've had a fairly easy time hiring people with good experience, good subject matter expertise in the policy arena, litigation support, and also happily in deal support because our deals get more complex as our product gets more complex."

Eyes on Washington

Haley works out of a home office 30 minutes outside of Boston, when he's not taking trips about once a month to Flock's headquarters in Atlanta. That's until more recently, he said, when he started spending some time in Washington.

Flock spent more than \$400,000 on federal lobbying in the first half of 2026, according to disclosure filings. It also recently retained the Republican lobbying firm Off Hill Strategies to help handle Congressional concerns.

Hawley, the senior senator from Missouri, has been among the company's most vocal critics in Washington. He opened an investigation into Flock's data collection, retention, and sharing last month, before broadening his probe a few days later to include Motorola Solutions, Verkada, and Axon Enterprise. CEOs from those three Flock competitors also declined invitations to this week's hearing.

Langley's absence on the Capitol Hill stood out given Flock's campaign this year to defend its practices to concerned residents, lawmakers, and regulators.

Flock said in a statement Thursday that the company has “been working in good faith” to address Hawley’s questions, including by “providing a comprehensive response to his inquiry and an in-depth demonstration for Committee staff of Flock’s technology and the safeguards governing its use.” It didn’t directly address why it skipped the hearing.

The startup said it’s supported legislation in multiple states and would “welcome the opportunity” to do the same at the federal level.

“One of the absolute best ways to gain credibility with policymakers is just to answer questions, be willing to listen to a question and answer it to the best of your knowledge,” Haley said in the earlier interview.

Verkada said its CEO was unable to attend the hearing but that the company has also been engaging with Subcommittee members. Motorola and Axon didn’t respond to requests for comment.

Federal lawmakers have introduced bills that would bar federal agencies from purchasing or deploying automated surveillance systems, or withhold funding from cities using such cameras. State officials from Arizona, Florida, Connecticut, California, and Texas, among others, have ended their contracts with the startup, sued cities and police departments using the technology, banned the use of cameras, or opened investigations.

“I understand entirely that some people might look at Flock and say, ‘Even if I believe everything you’re saying about your technology and the safeguards and everything else, your technology could someday be the infrastructure for a surveillance state, and that makes me worried,’” Haley said. “And my response to that is, ‘Me too.’”

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