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Flock cameras stir concerns

Opponents worry about privacy and police misuse

N’dea Yancey-Bragg
USA TODAY

License plate readers have been shot at in Tennessee, hit with a truck in California, beaten with a baseball bat in Virginia, cut down with a saw in Texas and splattered with paint in New York. And they’ve been regularly blocked by a protester in Florida.

There also has been bipartisan criticism of a coast-to-coast network of cameras that continues trying to track the movements of vehicles.

People are raising privacy concerns as well as others about misuse, mistakes and road safety in city council meetings, lawsuits and a planned national week of action in late August.

Chad Marlow, senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union who focuses on privacy, surveillance and technology issues, said the technology triggers concerns about government overreach on the right and worries about who is being targeted on the left.

“For people in the center or the nonpolitically engaged are even like, ‘I don’t want to be tracked everywhere I go,’” he said. “And so there’s different reasons, but everyone is arriving at the same position, which is mass government surveillance in this country has gotten completely out of control and needs to be reined in immediately.”

Though multiple companies

See **CAMERAS**, Page 3A



Flock cameras like this one on a utility pole in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, collect vehicles’ license plate, make, model and color, information that is searchable by law enforcement agencies.

PAUL EDWARD PARKER/PROVIDENCE JOURNAL FILE; GRAPHIC, GETTY IMAGES

Opioid may surpass fentanyl’s threat

Cychlorphine linked to 2 deaths in New Jersey

Joe Wicke
Asbury Park Press
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

A new synthetic opioid that is more dangerous than fentanyl and is linked to two deaths in New Jersey has caused growing concern among health experts.

The opioid, called cychlorphine, has a potency approximately 10 times greater than fentanyl, said Alex Krotulski, director at the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education.

Since its first report by the Drug Enforcement Administration in 2024, the CFSRE has seen cychlorphine circulate in approximately 20 states, Krotulski said.

This includes New Jersey, where two fatal overdoses associated with cychlorphine occurred, he said.

But Krotulski said that cychlorphine may be circulating in more states.

“[It] doesn’t mean that [cychlorphine’s] not in other states,” Krotulski said. “We just may not have gotten samples from those states that have been positive yet. So it really is in all regions of the country.”

Cychlorphine is an emerging opioid that neither has recognized medical value nor is FDA-approved, a spokesperson for the DEA said. Rather, cychlorphine belongs to a group of drugs sometimes referred to as “orphines,” which are reported to be “significantly” stronger than fentanyl, the spokesperson said.

In comparison, fentanyl is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin when used as a painkiller, according to the DEA’s website. Krotulski said, however, that cychlorphine can be thought of as an “in-between” of fentanyl and carfentanil, a synthetic opioid that’s 100 times more potent than fentanyl.

Similar to fentanyl, cychlorphine administers pain-relieving and euphoric effects in its users, Krotulski said. However, he said it also leads to respiratory depression, which interrupts a person’s normal breathing cycle.

Howard Greller, a medical toxicologist for the New Jersey Poison Control Center at Rutgers University, said opioids like fentanyl and cychlorphine alter signals in a user’s brain that remind them to breathe, which can sometimes have fatal consequences.

“If you were to hold your breath,” Greller said, “you would feel that anxiety

See **OPIOID**, Page 2A

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