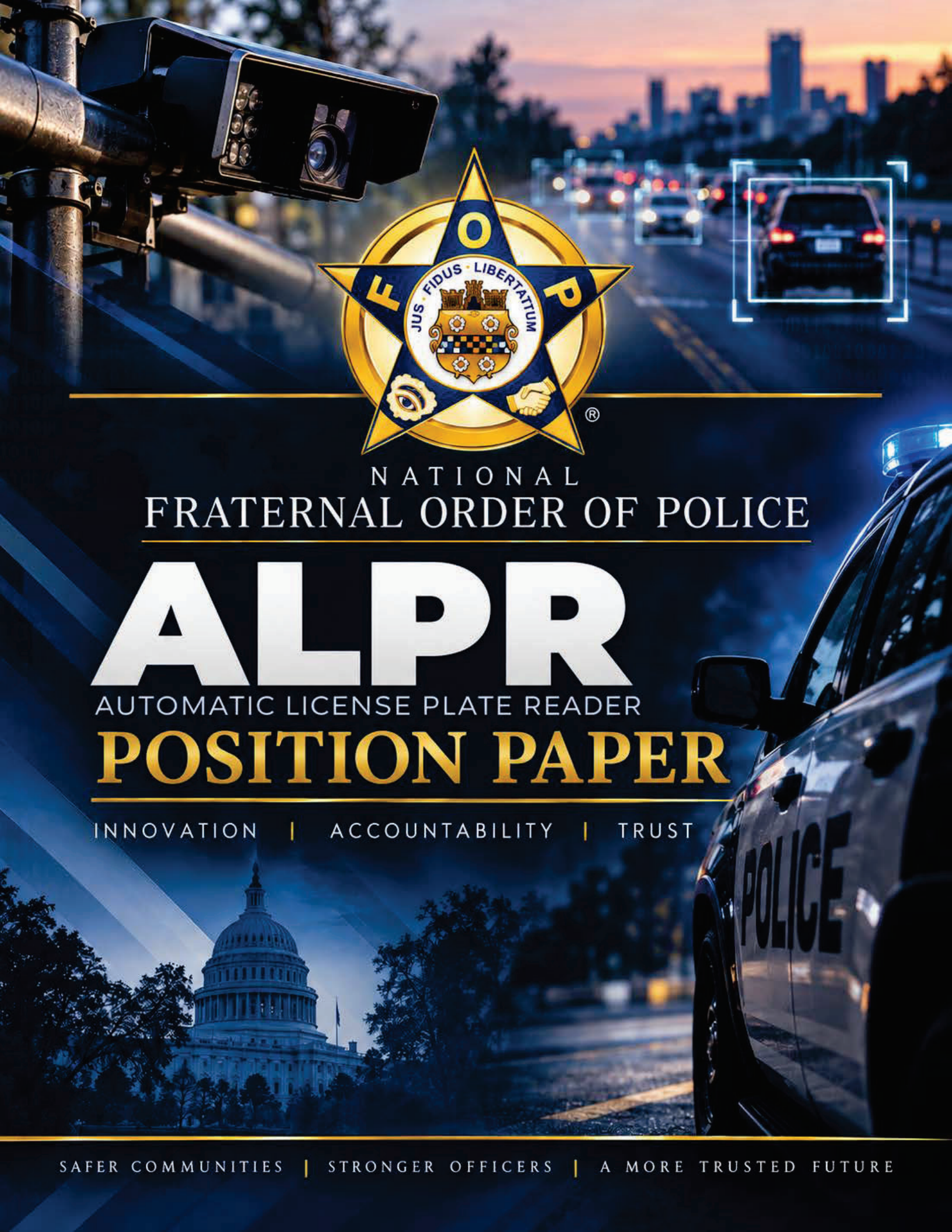
NATIONAL
FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE
ALPR
AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE READER
POSITION PAPER
INNOVATION | ACCOUNTABILITY | TRUST
POLICE
SAFER COMMUNITIES | STRONGER OFFICERS | A MORE TRUSTED FUTURE

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

POSITION STATEMENT

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and Emerging Law Enforcement Technologies

The National Fraternal Order of Police strongly supports the continued use of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and similar technologies as essential tools for modern law enforcement. When used lawfully, ethically, and with appropriate safeguards, these technologies enhance public safety, strengthen investigative capabilities, and protect the officers who serve our communities.

Technology as a Force Multiplier

Law enforcement has long relied on technological advancements to improve public safety. ALPR systems represent another important tool, helping officers identify stolen vehicles, locate wanted suspects and missing persons, develop investigative leads, and solve crimes.

At a time when agencies nationwide face serious recruitment and retention challenges, technology is an essential force multiplier. Officers cannot be everywhere at once, and ALPR systems allow agencies to extend their capabilities and deploy limited resources more effectively.

Responsible Use and Accountability

The National FOP recognizes that any technology carries the potential for misuse. Incidents involving unauthorized access or improper use of ALPR data must be taken seriously, investigated, and addressed through appropriate disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

However, individual misconduct does not justify eliminating or broadly restricting a valuable law enforcement tool.

History provides an important lesson. When the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) was introduced, similar concerns arose regarding privacy and misuse. Rather than abandoning this critical resource, law enforcement established policies, access controls, auditing procedures, and accountability measures.

The same approach must guide ALPR technology. Misconduct should be addressed through effective policies and individual accountability, not by denying officers access to tools that protect communities and save lives.

Strong Policies and Privacy Protections

The National FOP believes that responsible technology use begins with clear, enforceable agency policies. Every agency deploying ALPR systems should establish comprehensive safeguards that address:

- Authorized use: Restricting access and searches to legitimate law enforcement purposes.
- Privacy and data security: Protecting information through appropriate retention, storage, sharing, and deletion policies.
- Oversight and accountability: Maintaining access controls, audit trails, supervisory review, and meaningful consequences for misuse.
- Training: Ensuring officers understand legal requirements, agency policies, and their responsibilities.
- Vendor responsibility: Requiring technology providers to maintain strong security standards, protect sensitive information, and operate transparently.

These safeguards must be consistently enforced and regularly reviewed as technology evolves.

Building and Maintaining Public Trust

Public confidence is essential to effective policing. Communities must trust that technology deployed for their protection will respect their constitutional rights and privacy. Officers must likewise trust that technology providers will safeguard sensitive information and support the legitimate use of their products.

That trust requires a shared commitment from law enforcement agencies, technology providers, policymakers, and the communities we serve.

While legitimate concerns about privacy and oversight deserve serious consideration, unnecessary restrictions on ALPR technology risk undermining public safety and depriving officers of valuable investigative resources.

National FOP Position

The National Fraternal Order of Police supports the continued availability and responsible use of ALPR technology—we know for a fact that the use of this technology has saved lives. We therefore oppose efforts that would abandon this technology, or unnecessarily restrict these important public safety tools based on individual incidents of misuse.

At the same time, we strongly advocate for comprehensive agency policies, meaningful oversight, appropriate privacy protections, and accountability for those who violate the public trust.

Technology alone does not build trust. Trust is earned through responsible use, sound policies, transparency, and accountability.

Our responsibility is not to choose between protecting public safety and safeguarding individual rights. We must do both.

The National FOP remains committed to ensuring that America's law enforcement officers have the tools they need to protect our communities while upholding the constitutional principles and public trust upon which effective policing depends.