

Texas bill would make recording police illegal for citizens

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© ASSOCIATED PRESS Rep. Jason Villalba, R-Dallas, holds a sonogram showing his unborn son during final remarks before a provisional vote on HB 2, an abortion bill, Tuesday, July 9, 2013, in Austin, Texas. A final,

A bill introduced to the Texas House of Representatives would make it illegal for private citizens to record police within 25 feet.

House Bill 2918, introduced by Texas Rep. Jason Villalba (R-Dallas) on Tuesday, would make the offense a misdemeanor. Citizens who are armed would not be permitted to record police activity within 100 feet of an officer, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Only representatives of radio or TV organizations that hold an FCC license, newspapers and magazines would have the right to record police.

The legislator disagreed with people on Twitter who said he's seeking to make all filming of cops illegal.

"My bill ... just asks filmers to stand back a little so as not to interfere with law enforcement," Villalba tweeted.

The bill would go against precedent set in 2011 by an appeals court, which found that citizens are allowed to record police, according to the ACLU.

Villalba's bill comes at a time of increased public scrutiny over the police killings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and others. In Garner's case, a grand jury didn't indict the police officer who put Garner in a chokehold before his death, but another grand jury did indict the man who filmed the incident on weapons charges.

Last year, HuffPost reporter Ryan J. Reilly and another reporter were detained and assaulted while attempting to film a swarm of police officers filling up a McDonald's in Ferguson, Missouri, the town where Brown was killed. That filming, as well as other recordings of police interactions by the public, are currently legal.