

NEWS

Safety concerns forced ICEblock removal, Apple tells lawmaker

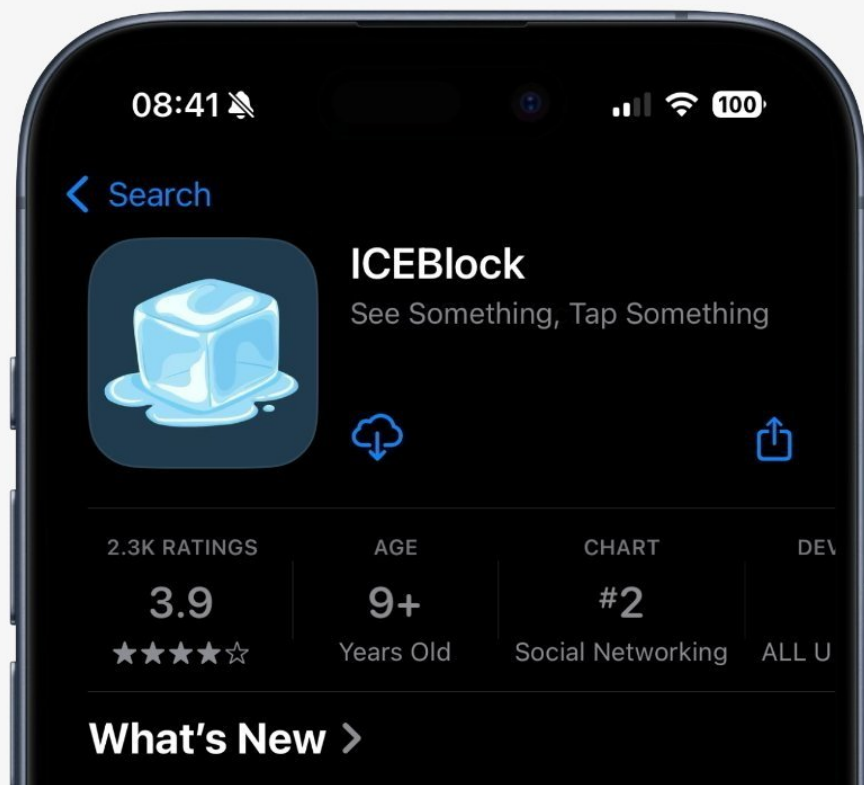


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ICEBlock in the App Store, pre-removal

Apple has doubled down on its claims that removing ICEblock and similar apps from the [App Store](#) was necessary for safety, though chiefly because it was never going to admit to bowing to government pressure.

In July 2025, the Department of Justice [publicly threatened](#) the developer of

the riots caused when ICE agents entered Los Angeles against the city mayor's orders.

Apple is now being asked to justify how in October 2025, it subsequently removed ICEblock from the App Store. Only excerpts of Apple's latest comments have been reported, but CNN says that the company's July 2026 letter doubled down on safety as the reason for the removal.

The letter, written in response to Rep. Jamie Raskin (D) of the House Judiciary Committee, reportedly says that then-Attorney General Pam Bondi had "expressed serious concerns to Apple that ICEBlock posed a threat to the safety of federal officers."

This had been followed by FBI Director Kash Patel claiming that apps such as ICEblock had been used to track agents. That statement was specifically about a shooting at an ICE facility in September 2025, which wasn't related to the ICEBlock app, given that the building obviously wasn't in motion, and was known as an ICE facility for over a decade.

Apple also says that it saw a "significant increase in ICE activity and threats against ICE" around this time.

Therefore, says Apple, it decided to remove ICEblock and similar apps. Apple does not say that it was ordered to remove the apps, and the DOJ has previously denied issuing any such order. Our research at the time found that there was no legal order, likely to skirt First Amendment arguments since it wasn't a legal request.

Apple says instead that it concluded that ICE-tracking apps were in violation of App Store policies since they gave users "precise location information about ICE officers (and, as a result, other individuals who may be in proximity to ICE agents, such as protestors or detainees), thus providing a potential roadmap for targeted violence and creating a significant risk of harm."



Apple's removal of ICEblock prompted Portland protesters to march on Apple Stores dressed as Santa Claus. Image source: keir-pdx on Bluesky

The published excerpts from the letter continue with Apple saying that it "does not take decisions about removing apps from the App Store lightly, but acts when it must — especially when there are serious concerns that an app is creating safety risks."

Why Raskin is investigating

ICEblock did not induce violence against agents, but the DOJ and FBI said that it did. After they said that, Apple removed the apps.

Apple will of course never say that it bowed to government pressure. But it appears to be solely repeating the safety argument that Rep. Raskin in his initial letter to the company refused to accept.

Raskin had pointed out that the September 2025 shooter "did not need a tracking app to locate the fixed position of a government building." According to Raskin, the shooter had also been "reported to have found the address using an app that comes standard on Apple devices," and which was not removed.

The questions that Raskin first asked Apple can be read [in full online](#). He began investigating both Apple and Google back in [February 2026](#), and his later letter required detailed explanations of what apps were removed and why.

Apple has not commented publicly. The DOJ has also not spoken about Raskin's letter or Apple's response, but it has continued to claim that ICE apps are dangerous.

"Our law officers are facing an over 1,600% increase in assaults, a 3,300% increase in vehicle attacks, and an 8,000% increase in death threats," said a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokesperson. "Further, these apps are a method to interfere with law enforcement activities and harbor illegal aliens."

ICEblock and similar apps are not illegal, in the same way that Apple Maps pinpointing speed traps is not illegal. The DHS has not commented on reasons why alleged assaults against ICE agents are up, it has only targeted apps.

And, locations were generally after-the-fact data. User reports tended towards where ICE action was, not is, and lagged a half-hour or more behind actual movements.

What happens next

Given that Apple's response to Raskin has not been published fully, it's not clear what else the company may have said. It isn't known whether Raskin will consider the matter closed, nor yet what steps he or the House Judiciary Committee could take next.

But what Apple must be hoping will happen next is that the whole issue be forgotten. Apple can say it wasn't ordered to remove the apps, and the DOJ can say it never made such an order, but effectively that is what happened.

Apple will remove apps that are against the law, and ICEBlock is not. This time, it

But it's also [an abdication](#) of Apple's stated morals on free speech for individuals.



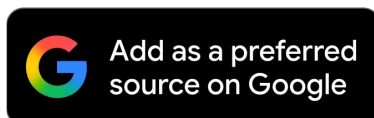
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William Gallagher has 30 years of experience between the BBC and AppleInsider discussing Apple technology. Outside of AppleInsider, he's best known for writing Doctor Who radio dramas for BBC/Big Finish, and is the De...

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ICE definition of assault: subject makes contact with ICE officer while being dogpiled by ICE officers.

ICE definition of vehicle attack: subjects vehicle made contact with ICE vehicle while being rammed by ICE vehicle.

ICE definition of death threats: protestors blowing whistles and driving cars in general vicinity of ICE officers.