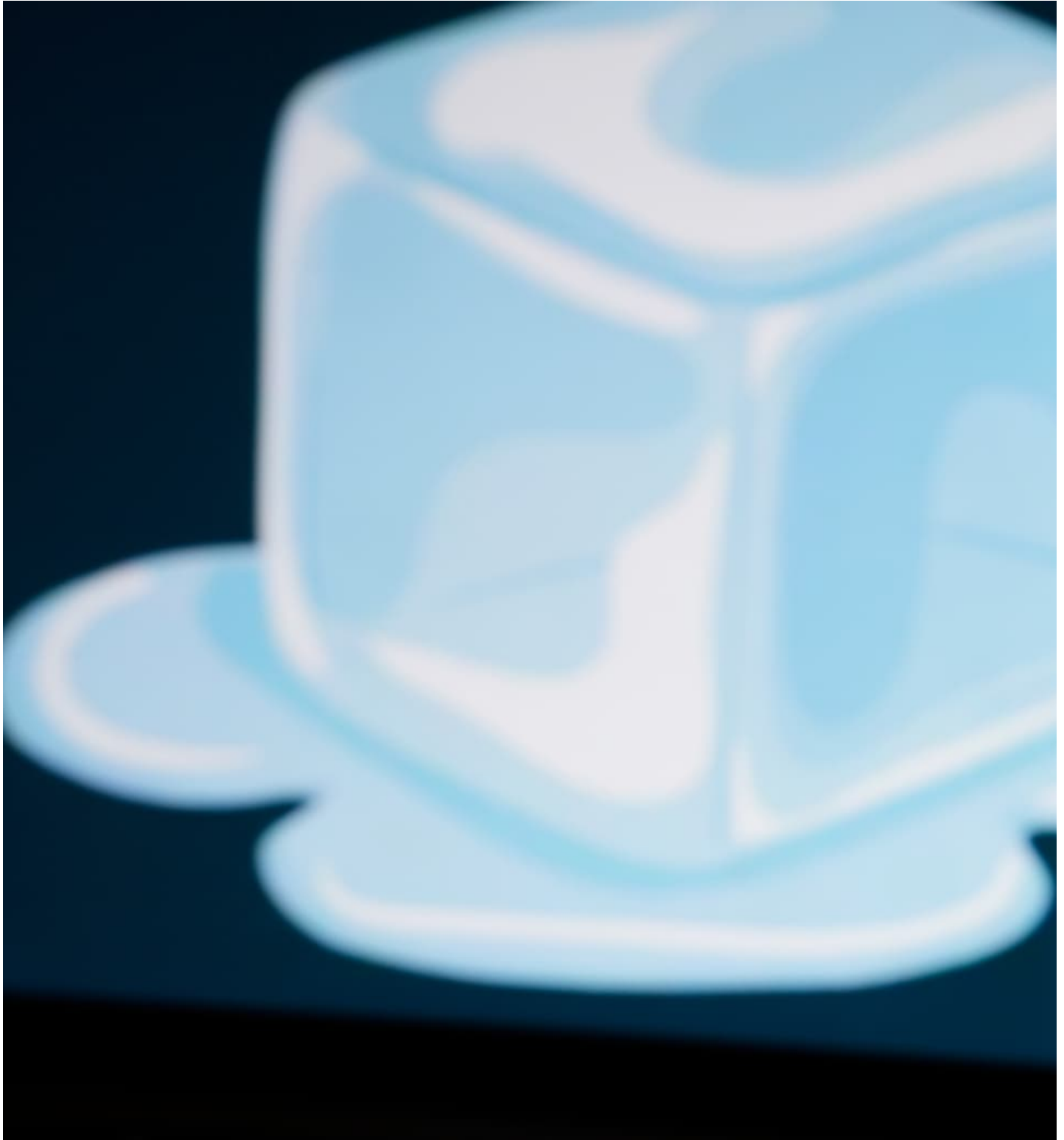


Creator of ICE agent tracking app asks Apple to rescind ban from online store

Lora Kolodny, Dan Mangan



In this photo illustration, the ICEBlock app is displayed on an Apple iPhone on October 02, 2025 in Los Angeles, California.

Justin Sullivan | Getty Images News | Getty Images

The creator of ICEBlock, the app used to track local sightings of ICE agents and other law-enforcement authorities, has asked [Apple](#) to rescind its decision to drop the app from its online store.

Joshua Aaron, the free app's creator, also blasted the Trump administration for pressuring Apple to ban the app over fears it could be used to harm [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) agents.

"This is not about me, or ICEBlock," Aaron said in an interview on Friday with CNBC.

"This is about our fundamental constitutional rights in this country being stripped away by this administration, and the powers that be who are capitulating to their requests," he said.

"I'm incredibly disappointed with the decision that Apple made," Aaron said.

"In almost every interview that I did, I was asked if I was afraid that Apple might take the app down, and my answer was always to defend Apple and say, you know, look, when this app was first submitted, it went through a heavy review process with both Apple's legal and senior officials in App Review."

Aaron, who said that he is consulting an attorney about the situation, directly asked Apple to allow him to appeal its decision Thursday to drop the app, which became available last spring.

He shared a screenshot of the message he sent Apple after the company notified him of the move.

"There is no objectionable content in the app," Aaron wrote in that message, which noted Apple's review process.

"There have been no changes to the content provided or the features in the app," he wrote. "Please immediately rescind this removal and put it back on the App Store."

Aaron, in his interview with CNBC, compared ICEBlock to apps like Waze and others that allow drivers to report sightings of law enforcement officers on public roads so they can warn each other about and avoid getting speeding tickets.

CNBC has requested comment from Apple on Aaron's remarks.

"We created the App Store to be a safe and trusted place to discover apps," Apple said in a statement to NBC News on Thursday.

"Based on information we've received from law enforcement about the safety risks associated with [ICEBlock](#), we have removed it and similar apps from the App Store," the company said.

[Google](#) on Friday joined [Apple](#) in removing from its online store other apps that can be used to anonymously report sightings of ICE agents and other authorities.

Google's store had not carried ICEBlock, which exploded in popularity over the summer after Trump administration officials criticized it.

"ICEBlock was never available on Google Play, but we removed similar apps for violations of our policies," a Google spokesperson told NBC News. The spokesperson said Google was not contacted by the Justice Department about its offering of such apps.

Apple's dropping of ICEBlock came after direct pressure from [Attorney General Pam Bondi](#), and amid controversy over the Trump administration's aggressive enforcement of immigration law with ICE agents and other authorities.

The FBI said last week that a gunman whose [attack on a Dallas ICE facility](#) led to the deaths of two detained immigrants and the wounding of a third detainee had recently searched apps tracking the presence of ICE agents.

The gunman, Joshua Jahn, [intended to kill ICE agents](#) in the attack, which ended with him fatally shooting himself, authorities said.

Apple CEO Tim Cook holds a next generation iPhone 17 during an Apple special event at Apple headquarters on September 09, 2025 in Cupertino, California.

Justin Sullivan | Getty Images

Bondi, in a statement that the Justice Department sent CNBC on Friday, said, "We reached out to Apple [Thursday] demanding they remove the ICEBlock app from their App Store — and Apple did so."

"ICEBlock is designed to put ICE agents at risk just for doing their jobs, and violence against law enforcement is an intolerable red line that cannot be crossed," Bondi said.

"This Department of Justice will continue making every effort to protect our brave federal law enforcement officers, who risk their lives every day to keep Americans safe."

Federal agents confront protesters outside of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building on September 28, 2025 in Portland, Oregon.

Trump administration border czar Tom Homan, in an interview Thursday night with Fox News' Sean Hannity, said, "They're gonna investigate these people who put these apps up — because it puts law enforcement at great risk."

ICEBlock became the top social networking app in Apple's App Store shortly after White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt condemned the app during a June 30 briefing.

[CNN that same day](#) had published an article on the app that quoted Aaron as saying that he developed ICEBlock after seeing the Trump administration's deportation efforts escalate.

"When I saw what was happening in this country, I wanted to do something to fight back," Aaron said at the time, suggesting that the immigration enforcement efforts were reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

"We're literally watching history repeat itself."

ICEBlock has been downloaded more than 1 million times since it was introduced this year, according to data provided to NBC News by the app tracking firm Appfigures.

The app hit a high of nearly 114,000 downloads in a single day on July 1, a day after the CNN article about the app sparked criticism from the Trump administration.

[ICE's acting director, Todd Lyons](#), on June 30 said, "Advertising an app that basically paints a target on federal law enforcement officers' backs is sickening."

"My officers and agents are already facing a 500% increase in assaults, and going on live television to announce an app that lets anyone zero in on their locations is like inviting violence against them with a national megaphone," Lyons said.

But Aaron, in [an NBC interview days later](#), called the Trump administration's criticism of ICEBlock "another right-wing fearmongering scare tactic."

He said he designed the app to help immigrants who are afraid of being deported.

"I grew up in a Jewish household, and being part of the Jewish community," Aaron said.

"I had the chance to meet Holocaust survivors and learn the history of what happened in Nazi Germany, and the parallels that we can draw between what's happening right now in our country and Hitler's rise to power are undeniable."