ICEBlock developer sues Trump administration over App Store removal

Joshua Aaron, the developer of the ICEBlock app, is suing Attorney General Pam Bondi, US Homeland Security Secretary Kirsti Noem, acting director of ICE Todd Lyons, White House "Border Czar" Tom Homan, and other federal officials over the Trump administration's "unlawful threats" made against Aaron and its actions to pressure Apple to pull the app from the App Store, which it did.

"We promised you we would fight back. Well, today's the day we make good on the promise," according to a post from ICEBlock's official account on Bluesky. Aaron, Apple, and the Department of Homeland Security, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from *The Verge*. Department of Justice spokesperson Natalie Baldassarre says "no comment beyond the AG's previous statements."

ICEBlock, which lets users anonymously report ICEBlock activity on their phone, rocketed up the App Store's charts earlier this year following coverage of the app in late June by CNN and the Trump administration's subsequent response. According to the lawsuit, ahead of ICEBlock's April release, Aaron had after "multiple conversations" with Apple's app review team, including its legal department, over the nature of the app.

But by late March, "Apple confirmed that ICEBlock was suitable for hosting and publication on its App Store," the lawsuit says. Ahead of CNN's article, the app had about 20,000 users, but gained over 500,000 user downloads "within less than a

week of CNN’s story.”

Last week, Republicans on the House Committee on Homeland Security sent letters to Apple and Google over apps like ICEBlock, arguing that “these apps pose serious risks to the safety of these officers, their families, and the security of their ongoing operations.” In September, Congressman Andy Ogles (R-TN) introduced a bill that would make it a federal crime to “maliciously publish the personal information of ICE agents and other federal law enforcement officers in ways that put them at risk of targeted harassment, assault, and murder.”

***Update, December 8th**: Added response from the DOJ.*

https://www.theverge.com/news/840164/iceblock-joshua-aaron-sues-trump-administration-apple-app-store-removeal