

Fight for the Future  
PO Box 55071 #95005  
Boston, MA 02205

6/8/2020

Boston City Council

**Testimony in Support of  
Ordinance Banning Facial Recognition Technology in Boston**

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing on behalf of Fight for the Future in support of the ordinance banning facial recognition technology in Boston presented by Councilors Wu and Arroyo. Fight for the Future is a national digital rights organization with more than 2.4 million members nationwide and more than 22,000 in Boston.

This ordinance establishes a ban on government use of face surveillance in the City of Boston. Boston must pass this ordinance to join Springfield, Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline, and Northampton in protecting racial justice, privacy, and freedom of speech.

Fight for the Future developed [BanFacialRecognition.org](http://BanFacialRecognition.org), a campaign backed by more than 30 organizations representing more than 15 million people across the country. This campaign has gathered more than 60,000 petition signatures from people calling on lawmakers to ban government and law enforcement use of this technology. We have also worked on winning campaigns to get [music festivals](#) and [colleges](#) to commit to not using this technology.

Facial recognition surveillance technology is unreliable, biased, and a threat to basic rights and safety. Like nuclear or biological weapons, facial recognition poses a threat to human society and basic liberty that far outweighs any potential benefits. Silicon Valley lobbyists are disingenuously calling for light “regulation” of facial recognition so they can continue to profit by rapidly spreading this surveillance dragnet. They’re trying to avoid the real debate: whether technology this dangerous should even exist. Industry-friendly and government-friendly oversight will not fix the dangers inherent in law enforcement’s use of facial recognition: we need an all-out ban.

Facial recognition is one of the most authoritarian and invasive forms of surveillance ever created, and it’s spreading like an epidemic. No amount of regulation can fix the dangers inherent in this form Big Brother automaton. We need to ban this technology outright, treat it like biological or nuclear weapons, and prevent it from proliferating before it’s too late.

Banning facial recognition is especially poignant right now, as people are taking to the streets to protest racism and to put an end to police violence against Black people. Police are targeting these people and facial recognition is a tool that would allow police to target anyone caught on camera near these protests and accuse them of alleged crimes. And since the technology is so flawed, it's highly likely that people of color could be misidentified and face terrible consequences.

I encourage you to press pause on the use of face surveillance by government entities in the City of Boston by supporting and passing this crucial ban. We cannot allow Boston to adopt authoritarian, unregulated, biased surveillance technology.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,