

June 8th, 2020

Boston City Council

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

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing on behalf of the Student Immigrant Movement (SIM) in support of the ordinance banning facial recognition technology in Boston presented by Councilors Wu and Arroyo. 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.

As a social and racial justice supporter and activist, I am extremely concerned that our City of Boston might possibly consider the utilization of face surveillance. This is a concern because although this technology pledges to “protect” our city, it is psychologically unhealthy for Bostonians to know that they are being watched 24/7. This hyper-surveillance is hyper-intrusion and it leads to hyper-criminalization. Going outside will feel like a virtual prison! Where is the freedom of the people in a land that claims “liberty and justice for all”? Additionally, face surveillance made by private companies and without federal and state regulations, is a technological way to use the gathered data to racially profile and disproportionately criminalize our most vulnerable and targeted Boston populations (Black, Brown, Latinx, immigrant youth of color).

A ban on face surveillance technology is critically important in the City of Boston because face surveillance harms our privacy and freedom of speech. This type of surveillance threatens to create a world where people are watched and identified as they attend a protest, congregate at a place of worship, visit a medical provider, and go about our daily lives.

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 time, attention and consideration.

Leidy Quiceno

-Boston Resident and Board Member of SIM