

15 Michelle Way
PineBrook, NJ 07058

Boston City Council

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

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing as a private citizen 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 an educator in the Boston Public School Systems, I strongly urge you to ban face surveillance technology because this technology is harmful to our students and communities. Our students struggle with a variety of mental and physical health issues, and as a food and nutrition educator it has become clear to me that our students need further investment in policies and programs that will improve their outcomes as individuals and contributors to society. Face surveillance technology is the opposite of an investment in our students' best outcomes.

First and foremost, our attendance rates already suffer for a number of reasons and burdens that families endure. Face surveillance technology is a danger to students with different citizenship statuses and would potentially deter them from attending school and receiving an education. Further, facial recognition technology is a violation of students and staff's privacy and ability to operate outside of a surveilled police state. If students and staff are constantly being monitored, we will lose the safe and brave spaces that schools provide for us to build genuine relationships, and care for the wellbeing of each other.

As a private citizen, I am further outraged by facial surveillance technology because there are currently no laws or regulations in place that monitor how this data will be used, nor is there a clear consensual relationship between data collection and use. Because I identify as a queer woman of mixed Asian and Caucasian heritage, a ban on face surveillance technology is critically important in the City of Boston because numerous studies have shown that this technology reinforces racial and gender bias. In fact, an MIT researcher found that 1 in 3 Black women is likely to be misclassified by the technology. A misclassification means that city officials may be drawing incorrect conclusions, and tracking my whereabouts even if I am not relevant to their investigation. This is a violation of my privacy, and my trust in local government.

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,

Leilani Stacy