

Facial Recognition

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To: Manning, Jacqueline O. (HOU) <Jacqueline.O.Manning@mahouse.gov>

Dear Ms. Manning and Concerned Legislators,

I am writing to express my opposition to the use of facial recognition software in Massachusetts. In countries where the software has been used, it has been consistently misused and abused. There is ample evidence that the software frequently misidentifies people with darker skin pigment, which may lead to an increase in false arrest and misidentification of people of color in Massachusetts, groups that are already unfairly profiled.

In countries like China, the software has been used to target minority groups like the Uyghurs, to conduct surveillance upon them, monitor their movements and ensure they do not break curfew or meet with other "undesirables." While Massachusetts is a far different society than China, there might be those in power here too who would like to monitor the comings and goings of perceived political rivals or dissidents.

Who would monitor the facial recognition data? How would it be stored? For how long? Who would have access and why?

The temptation to trade liberty and freedom for security has ever been a debate in this country and this state. Would Samuel Adams have voted to approve state sponsored tracking of individuals? I think not. Although he would not comprehend the software, he would understand the idea, and he and the founders of our state would reject the kind of state overreach this technology represents.

We too should reject facial recognition software in our state to ensure our liberty and to prevent misuse, misidentification and mistrust among our citizenry.

Respectfully submitted,

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