

I am calling for a total ban on facial recognition technology. I oppose use of facial recognition technology in all circumstances due to violation of 4th amendment rights, continued overuse against people exercising their 1st amendment rights, lack of oversight, failure of BPD to ensure legitimate use of the technology as well as storage of information, and finally necessary funding for equipment, training, and on going costs.

Baltimore Police Department (BPD) is under a consent decree for being unable to equitably police the city discriminating against already marginalized and racialized communities. Facial recognition technology further discriminates against Black and Brown faces with poor recognition and database pattern comparisons, increasing arrests of Black people, and inequitable application of technology. Frequently in spite of policies and claims from police departments facial recognition technology is the sole or major evidence for arrest despite its known flaws. BPD should not be handled another tool to further hammer already overpoliced demographics in the city.

Citizens should be allowed in public spaces without constant governmental surveillance. BPD has proven unable to use technology appropriately. The data systems for truly protected storage and retrieval force outrageous expenditures to foreign-based companies when we already overfund the BPD with diminishing results. Finally, it is obvious from old and recent plans - spy plane, CitiWatch, social media, small unmanned aircraft, and cell phone surveillance - that city policing involves unlawful violations of rights not preventing crimes, not solving crimes, and not acting lawfully or ethically as the recent cases of Pava LaPere and Brooklyn Homes show.

Baltimore already spends more on policing without any verifiable outcome improvements for those expenditures. Adding additional high-cost technology alone will not address the problems with policing and with the BPD in the city. This is a measure of show – looking like the city council and BPD is addressing crime without fundamentally dealing with any needs in the city and spending a large portion of budget that should go to Baltimore's citizens and their needs.