



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Stefanie Mavronis, Director, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)
DATE	October 28, 2024
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 23-0377 – Surveillance Technology-Procurement

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

October 28, 2024

No Position

The Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) has reviewed Council Bill 23-0377. The first reader establishes, in part, a Community Advisory Commission on Surveillance to provide guidance on how surveillance technologies should be used by the City and its agencies.

MONSE recognizes the need for the City to involve the community at large in the development and implementation of policy and practice concerning the use of surveillance technologies. The use of surveillance technologies must be rooted in transparency, and communities should be made aware of the potential for data collected via surveillance to be stored. Given the lack of an “opt-out” option with respect to broad public surveillance, the technology can lead to lack of informed consent from those whose data is collected and stored. More generally, MONSE supports opportunities for the community to negotiate authority over the collection and use of community-based data.

Nationally there has been a proliferation in police departments’ use of surveillance technologies, mostly without any community input or control. The absence of meaningful community guidance or oversight on the implementation of surveillance technologies presents significant threats to civil rights and civil liberties that disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities.

The City of Baltimore’s policymaking process should include guidance from the community on the ethical usage of surveillance technologies, including consideration of disparate impacts along racial and economic lines. We must ensure that the constitutional liberties and civil rights of Baltimore residents are protected while relying on surveillance technologies to enhance public safety.

While MONSE supports strong community collaboration and oversight on the use of surveillance technologies and community control of data, this legislation has no direct impact on the agency and we defer to the Law Department on the legal or technical parameters.

For this reason, we respectfully take no position and defer to the Law Department on City Council Bill 23-0377.