

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 21-0046R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Burnett, Conway, Cohen, Dorsey, Bullock

Introduced and read first time: June 8, 2021

Assigned to: Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Comptroller, City Solicitor, Department of Transportation, Baltimore Development Corporation, Department of Finance, Baltimore Police Department, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Use of Facial Recognition Technology in Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, the Mayor's
4 Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Department of Transportation, the Law
5 Department, the Office of the Comptroller, the Department of Finance, the Baltimore City
6 State's Attorney's Office, the Office of the Public Defender for Baltimore City, the Baltimore
7 Development Corporation, and concerned parties from Baltimore's legal, academic, security,
8 and non-profit sectors to discuss the use of facial recognition technology in Baltimore and
9 any local legislative options for the Baltimore City Council to consider in order to balance
10 public safety, privacy, and individual civil liberties.

11 **Recitals**

12 Facial recognition technology is form of biometric technology that purports to be able to use
13 algorithms to identify individuals based on their faces. While public safety officials may extol
14 this technology as another "arrow in the quiver" for fighting crime, there is no question that
15 facial recognition technology is fraught with collateral issues such as infringements on privacy
16 and individual civil liberties. Further, several prominent academic studies have questioned
17 whether this technology is truly accurate due to algorithmic racial bias against black, indigenous,
18 and people of color.

19 Recently, recognizing the potential issues associated with the technology, the Baltimore City
20 Council has considered Council Bill 21-0001, which would pause and prohibit most City
21 government and private uses of facial recognition technology. As drafted, the legislation's pause
22 would terminate in 2 years unless the City Council takes further legislative action to have the ban
23 continue. Indeed, the prohibitions on this technology mirror those prohibitions recently passed by
24 cities like Boston, Minneapolis, and San Francisco.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 Council Bill 21-0001 was just the beginning of a broader policy discussion. As the use of this
2 technology spreads, it is incumbent on responsible policymakers to study this issue fully hearing
3 from all parties on both sides of this issue. It is the purpose of this resolution and its associated
4 hearings to use the pause time to study facial recognition: its benefits, its downsides, and hear
5 from experts in the field to assess whether the City's pause should continue and whether any
6 further legislative improvements are necessary.

7 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
8 Council invites representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, the Mayor's Office of
9 Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Department of Transportation, the Law Department,
10 the Office of the Comptroller, the Department of Finance, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's
11 Office, the Office of the Public Defender for Baltimore City, the Baltimore Development
12 Corporation, and concerned parties from Baltimore's legal, academic, security, and non-profit
13 sectors to discuss the use of facial recognition technology in Baltimore and any local legislative
14 options for the Baltimore City Council to consider in order to balance public safety, privacy, and
15 individual civil liberties.

16 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
17 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and
18 Engagement, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the City Solicitor, the
19 Comptroller, the Director of Finance, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the District Public
20 Defender for Baltimore City, the Chief Executive Officer of the Baltimore Development
21 Corporation, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.