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Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2022 6:40 PM
To: Teresa Gomez <Teresa.Gomez@longbeach.gov>
Cc: Gaby Hernandez <ghernandez@lbirc.org>
Subject: Comment on Surveillance Technology at Equity & Human Relations Commission

-EXTERNAL-

Dear Commissioners,

I am the Policy and Community Advocacy Attorney for the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild and a Long Beach resident. I write in both my personal and professional capacity to register my objection to LBPD using *any* form of facial recognition technology, Automated License Plate Readers, or any other form of surveillance technology. LBPD is severely overfunded and over-militarized. LBPD can only respond to harm, not prevent it, and when they do respond, they often do so with violence and cause more harm, especially to Black people and other people of color. Giving LBPD access to powerful surveillance technology will only increase these harms and LBPD's potential for violence, especially as the technologies themselves perpetuate racial biases. After all, the technologies contain the same biases as their creators; they are not neutral, nor created in a vacuum. Multiple surveillance companies have documented ties to white supremacist groups; even absent explicit ties, the creators of these technologies are overwhelmingly white. The racial disparities inherent in facial recognition in particular have been well-documented and have led to wrongful arrests. For immigrant residents especially, LBPD access to biometric and other sensitive personal information presents a serious threat. LBPD already -- whether carelessly or maliciously -- shared noncitizens' license plate information with ICE, in violation of our sanctuary ordinance.

Fundamentally, this kind of surveillance technology gives LBPD too much power. Law enforcement entities use technologies that rapidly suck up many people's personal information, whether license plates or facial images, and then connect and make interoperable huge databases of individuals' information. We cannot change our biometrics, and so once that information is in these databases, the damage is permanent. Law enforcement entities including LBPD are increasingly able to track people in real time, without even the minimal protection of a warrant. Surveillance chills civic participation and dissent and gives LBPD the power to engage in reprisals and suppression. You cannot arm for peace, and we should not arm LBPD with this extreme power over our community.

Thank you for your consideration of my comment,

Caitlin Bellis | *she/her*

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