May 14, 2025

Chief Jeffrey Norman
Milwaukee Police Department
749 W. State Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Chief Norman:

We write in strong opposition to the deployment of facial recognition technology by the Milwaukee Police Department. While we understand the desire to enhance public safety and the promises people have made for this emerging technology, we believe these benefits are significantly outweighed by the risks they pose to privacy, civil liberties, and equitable policing. What is worse, given the rhetoric and actions of the current federal administration, the communities we represent have made clear to us that they believe it is particularly unwise and unsafe to implement this technology.
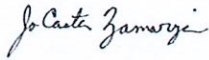
Facial recognition systems are prone to errors, with studies showing higher misidentification rates for people of color, women, and other marginalized groups.[1] Such inaccuracies could lead to wrongful arrests and exacerbate existing biases in law enforcement — biases we know the Milwaukee Police Department has worked for many years to eliminate. Additionally, widespread use of this technology puts a menacing face on law enforcement, creating the perception that the City is not concerned about eroding personal freedoms and chilling free expression.

We urge you to prioritize community trust and transparency by rejecting facial recognition technology and instead invest in proven, non-invasive methods to ensure safety. The robust debate at the Fire and Police Commission made very clear the public interest and concern. We understand that there are no plans to implement this technology at this time. Should that change, however, and should the Department choose to move forward with facial recognition technology, would we ask that it be preceded by a carefully-considered Standard Operating Procedure and that the entire program be discussed openly and in detail with the Common Council.

Thank you for your service and your consideration. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We would very much appreciate a written response to this letter.
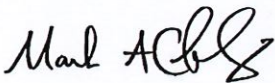
Sincerely,

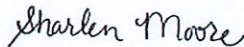JoCasta Zamarripa
Alderwoman, 8th District
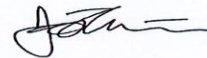
Marina Dimitrijevic
Alderwoman, 14th District

Alex Brower
Alderman, 3rd District

Mark Chambers, Jr.
Alderman, 2nd District

Sharlen Moore
Alderwoman, 10th District

José G. Pérez
Alderman, 12th District

DiAndre Jackson
Alderman, 7th District

Larresa Taylor
Alderwoman, 9th District

Lamont Westmoreland
Alderman, 5th District

Russell W. Stamper, II
Alderman, 15th District

[1] A *precis* of one such study, conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University, is available here: https://news.mit.edu/2018/study-finds-gender-skin-type-bias-artificial-intelligence-systems-0212