



Privacy Groups: Surveillance Is Threatening Democracy

Technocracy run by engineers and scientists threatens all types of governmental structures, not just 'democracy'. It seeks a scientific dictatorship where society is run and people are controlled by algorithm, as in China. □ TN Editor

On Monday, forty organizations signed a letter calling on an independent government watchdog to recommend a ban on U.S. government use of facial recognition technology.

The [letter was drafted](#) by the digital privacy advocacy group Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) and signed by organizations including the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Color of Change, Fight for the Future, Popular Resistance, and the Consumer Federation of America. The letter calls on the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) to *"recommend to the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security the suspension of facial recognition systems, pending further review."*

The PCLOB was originally created in 2004, as an independent agency

that advises the administration on privacy issues. *“The Congress specifically found that new surveillance powers ‘calls for an enhanced system of checks and balances to protect the precious liberties that are vital to our way of life and to ensure that the Government uses its powers for the purposes for which the powers were given’,”* the letter states.

The organizations challenge the PCLOB to *“examine the more significant public concerns about the use of facial recognition in public spaces.”* They also call on the board to address concerns that **facial recognition software can be used by “authoritarian governments to control minority populations and limit dissent could spread quickly to democratic societies.”**

The letter from EPIC mentions a recent *New York Times* [investigation](#) of a facial recognition service used by more than 600 law enforcement agencies across the country. As the *Mind Unleashed* [recently reported](#), Manhattan-based Clearview AI is collecting data from unsuspecting social media users and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) is using the controversial facial recognition tool to pinpoint the identity of unknown suspects. The *Times* investigation shows that the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security are also using the controversial tool.

The *MIT Technology Review* [believes](#) EPIC’s letter is *“one of the biggest efforts so far in the fight to stem the use of facial recognition technologies.”*

And while these 40 organizations call on the PCLOB to make an official recommendation, there are already examples of push back against facial recognition. San Francisco and Somerville, Massachusetts recently became the first local governments to ban the use of facial recognition tools. The European Commission is also [considering a ban on facial recognition in public for five years](#). In June 2019, the Georgetown Law Center on Privacy & Technology released a report titled [“America Under Watch: Face Surveillance in the United States”](#) which calls for a moratorium on facial recognition technology.

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Claim: It's Tech Giants Who Turned San Francisco Into 'Dystopian Nightmare Of Addiction, Homelessness And Criminality'

Technocrats care about inventing, not improving life for fellow citizens. San Francisco is dominated by tech giants but is in a state of dystopian anarchy by homeless, addicts, and criminals.

If they chose to have a normal role in society, billionaire entrepreneurs like Jack Dorsey (Twitter), Dara Khosrowshahi (Uber), Brian Chesky (Airbnb), and Marc Benioff (Salesforce), could have a huge impact in returning the City to human livability. □ TN Editor

Gilles Desaulniers moved to San Francisco 40 years ago, settling in the 'friendly, quaint and affordable' city after running out of cash while driving from [Canada](#) down the West Coast of America.

Today he runs a grocery store filled with fresh fruit, vegan snacks and organic wines typical of this famously liberal Californian city.

But Gilles has shut one outlet and would sell up entirely if anyone wanted this one, his remaining shop.

Each day, up to 30 people stroll in and openly steal goods, costing him hundreds of dollars.

He has been bitten twice recently by people in his shop and he also found a woman turning blue in the toilet after a drugs overdose, a hypodermic needle still stuck in her leg.

He showed me a metal door that is corroding due to people urinating in his doorway, then spoke of finding a man relieving himself in full view of infants playing in a child centre next door.

'Our society is falling apart,' says Desaulniers.

'If people do not play by some rules, society does not function. But it feels like there is no order, there is no shame.'

He uses two apocalyptic movies to illustrate the state of his adopted city: 'Living here feels like A Clockwork Orange and Blade Runner have both come true.'

I could grasp his despair. I had just passed dealers selling drugs beside a police car parked outside government offices, and seen their customers openly smoke fentanyl, an opioid 50 times stronger than heroin, then collapse on the street.

All cities have their seedy sides. But this is the very centre of San Francisco, by an upmarket Westfield shopping mall thronged with people in designer clothes perusing Rolex watches, Louis Vuitton handbags and Tiffany jewellery.

The beautiful city by the bay, where Tony Bennett famously left his heart and which poses as a beacon of progressiveness, has more billionaires per capita than any other on the planet.

Not long ago, a seven-bedroom home here recently sold for \$38 million (£29 million), while at the Michelin-starred Saison restaurant, the 'kitchen menu' starts at \$298 a head and reservations require a \$148 deposit.

The city authorities have a huge \$12 billion budget, handing their 31,800 staff average annual pay and benefit packages of an astonishing \$175,000.

Yet the tide of homeless, addicted and mentally ill people washing up here has become so severe that a global expert on slums claimed San Francisco may be more unsanitary than some of the poorest parts of Africa and Asia.

Oracle, one of the technology giants based in the nearby Silicon Valley, has switched a conference for 60,000 people to Las Vegas due to the toxic combination of 'poor street conditions' and costly hotels.

This followed a medical association moving its \$40 million convention out of San Francisco amid safety fears because of sordid tent encampments and overt drug use. Other events are being affected.

'Indoors, people are making deals, talking about healthcare and networking. Yet in the streets, I witnessed homeless people injecting cocaine,' tweeted Kistein Monkhouse while attending a recent J. P. Morgan conference for 9,000 people.

As one prominent academic tells me, it seems a cruel irony that so much squalor and despair is found in the Californian base of all those billionaire technology titans seeking to reshape the world in their image.

'San Francisco has always had hobos but we've never seen anything like this. It's become a vision of some kind of strange dystopian future,' says Joel Kotkin, a widely respected professor in urban studies.

He can reel off damning statistics to back his claim that San Francisco

symbolises the Golden State's descent into 'high-tech feudalism' including America's highest poverty levels, its worst rates of property crime and its biggest gap between top and middle incomes.

But one statistic stands out: almost half of homeless people in the United States are in California, according to a recent White House study.

And San Francisco, a comparatively small city that is home to tech giants such as Twitter, Uber and Airbnb, has the highest rate of 'unsheltered' citizens - at ten times the national level.

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Scientists: 5G Could 'Lower Sperm Counts And Sterilize Young Men'

5G wireless companies refuse to invest in scientific studies on the harmful effects of 5G radiation on humans; they also berate legitimate

scientists and physicians who are raising serious health warnings like this one. □ TN Editor

There are fears that increased levels of radiation in the UK as 5G coverage spreads across the country could seriously impact human fertility levels.

The rollout of the high-speed network, which was launched in Britain in May last year, has sparked protests from those who believe higher levels of electro-magnetic radiation (EMR) in the atmosphere are dangerous and 5G's potential health effects need to be tested.

A letter presented to Downing Street last week urged [Prime Minister](#) Boris Johnson to open an inquiry into “establishing the true impact of wireless communication systems on the health of the UK population”.

“We are extremely concerned by the vulnerability of our young and very young people to the harmful effects of pulsed RF radiation,” read the letter which was handed over along with two petitions, one of which was signed by 268 physicians and scientists.

“Study upon study is showing that this non-ionising radiation is causing oxidative DNA damage in cellular systems and this may be particularly harmful to the reproductive system of young boys, adolescents and young men.”

Sperm counts among British men have fallen by 29% in the last decade. [Multiple international studies](#) have found a link between increased mobile phone use and a drop in both the quantity and quality of sperm.

[A 2016 review by the Society for Reproduction and Fertility](#) reported that of 27 studies investigating the effects of mobile phone EMR on the male reproductive system, 21 resulted in negative consequences of exposure.

In a 2018 article called [‘Wi-Fi is an important threat to human health’](#) which was published in the journal Environmental Research, Dr Martin Pall from Washington State University cites a 1997 experiment

with chilling results.

Two pairs of young mice were placed into cages with different levels of exposure to a functioning antenna, although the exposure levels at both sites were well within safety guidelines.

The pair in the cage with a higher exposure level produced one litter of smaller than normal babies, a second litter with fewer than normal babies, and demonstrated infertility or very low fertility from this point on.

The pair exposed to a lower level of EMR produced four litters with fewer numbers of babies each time, before they became completely infertile.

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