



Nov. 20, 2017

Via electronic mail only

Honorable Mayor Jesse Arreguin and Members of the Berkeley City Council
Councilmember Linda Maio, Councilmember Cheryl Davila, Councilmember Ben Bartlett
Councilmember Kate Harrison , Councilmember Sophie Hahn, Councilmember Susan Wengraf
Councilmember Kriss Worthington , Councilmember Lori Droste
Berkeley City Council
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

cc: Berkeley City Clerk, Police Review Commission Chair George Lippman, Police Review
Commission Officer Katharine Lee,

**Re: Community Support for the Surveillance Equipment Use and Community Safety
Ordinance**

Honorable Mayor Arreguin and Council Members,

The undersigned coalition urges the Berkeley City Council to approve the Surveillance and Community Safety Ordinance. This coalition represents diverse Berkeley residents who are concerned with law enforcement's secretive and unaccountable use of technologies that can facilitate discriminatory policing and undermine public safety goals. This ordinance provides the Berkeley public with the information and opportunity to participate in important decisions about surveillance technology. We urge you to approve it without delay.

This Ordinance is the result of a robust and open debate among the City's residents, civil society organizations, and government stakeholders. This debate began with robust conversation in the Police Review Commission, and it has continued through the Peace and Justice Commission and Disaster and Fire Safety Commission, which has held hearings on the language and solicited the input of both community members and law enforcement. As a result, this Ordinance represents the civil rights and civil liberties values of Berkeley. The City Council now has the opportunity to enshrine these values into local law.

The Ordinance is straightforward: it requires essential transparency, accountability, and oversight for all surveillance technology proposals, and it ensures the public has the opportunity to learn about the civil rights and civil liberties impact of surveillance technologies before local officials acquire them. If acquired, technologies must be reexamined to ensure any benefits outweigh the civil liberties and civil rights costs. Recent amendments to the Ordinance ensure that the City will be able to address new surveillance technologies and that emergency use of such technologies will be strictly limited and subject to oversight.

As the Trump Administration signals that it will focus its surveillance and enforcement powers on immigrants and Muslim Americans, local leaders have a special responsibility to enact strong measures that protect vulnerable residents from suspicionless monitoring and the creation of databases exploitable for discriminatory ends.

This Ordinance helps protect the civil liberties and civil rights of all Berkeley residents and is the culmination of a year-long debate. We urge the City Council to adopt it without delay.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Northern California

American Friends Service Committee

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus

Block By Block Organizing Network

CAIR California

Center for Media Justice

Coalition for Police Accountability

Code Pink Bay Area

Color of Change

Courage Campaign

Courage to Resist

Defending Rights and Dissent (formerly Bill of Rights Defense Committee)

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Green Party of Alameda County

Greenlining Institute

Media Alliance

National Lawyers Guild - Committee on Democratic Communications

Oakland Privacy

Off Now

Peninsula Peace and Justice

Restore the 4th

Tenth Amendment Center

TURN – The Utilities Reform Network

Veterans for Peace East Bay

War Resisters League West

Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club