

Amazon Shareholder Meeting 2024 Statement (2 minutes)

My name is Tee Sannon, and I'm the Technology Policy Program Director at the ACLU of Washington, presenting Proposal 14 on behalf of Harrington Investments.

This proposal calls on Amazon to commission an independent study of Rekognition to understand the extent to which this facial recognition technology may threaten or violate privacy and civil rights, and unfairly target or surveil people of color, immigrants, and activists in the United States and worldwide.

The dangers posed by facial recognition technology are well-documented:

- Facial recognition allows police to track protesters at political rallies, ICE to spy on immigrants, and cities to routinely monitor the activities of their own residents.
- It can also enable governments to track and discriminate against people for their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political beliefs.
- Independent research shows that facial recognition technology is rife with racial and gender biases. When these technologies make errors, they can have drastic consequences, such as wrongful arrests made by law enforcement.

In response to these threats, at least 24 US jurisdictions have adopted bans on government use of facial recognition technology, including King County in Washington, home of Amazon's headquarters. Nearly 70 organizations have called on Amazon to stop selling Rekognition to governments. Each year, this proposal to conduct an independent study on Rekognition has gained increasing support from Amazon's own employees and shareholders.

By ignoring these calls, Amazon is dismissing a threat that continues to grow. We urge Amazon instead to make a good faith commitment to responsible and ethical development of facial recognition by commissioning an independent study of Rekognition's impact on privacy and civil rights. We urge shareholders to vote in support of Proposal 14 as a first step in protecting our democracy and liberties here in the US and around the world.