

# Portland Council work session on Surveillance Technologies

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My name is Romeo Sosa. I work as a Hotline Administrator and Trainer at Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition (PIRC). Thank you for inviting me today on this important topic.

Founded in 2006, Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition (PIRC) is a coalition of immigrant, refugee rights, and social justice organizations united to bring an end to detention and deportation of immigrant families. PIRC's core areas of work include advocacy on immigration policy, hotline, rapid response, deportation defense and community education on issues of immigration justice.

We have a hotline which families or friends can call in the event of a raid or if their loved one has been taken by ICE to help them. Through our mobilization efforts we have been able to apply enough pressure on ICE to release numerous individuals, returning them back to their families and their communities.

During the years I have been volunteering with PIRC and now as a staff I have seen how technology has played a key role to arrest and deport immigrants during the years.

They told us that Surveillance is the smart way for the future, but we know it is all part of the enforcement system that is attacking and harming our communities and controlling the anti deportation movement. The Biden administration is nothing different because the surveillance is growing and continues to have contracts with the technology industry. It is not surprise for us that the tech and data industries surveillance are so dominated by white people

Some examples of Programs that are still or no longer in Multnomah county.

- Priority Enforcement Program - Rejected in Multnomah County because community and PIRC pressure.
- State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)
- CARI program
- ERO -Enforcement and Removal Operations
- Criminal Alien Program - CAP - ICE presence in jails
- Secure Communities - Was sign in 2010 in Multnomah County

The Secure Communities program is a federal information-sharing partnership between Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The program helps to identify undocumented foreign nationals through state and local law enforcement.

Since 2014 ICE holds is no longer here in Multnomah county after a lot of community pressure from PIRC, lawyers and the immigrant community. How does this work? If you're arrested and you're an immigrant, ICE can request your local jail hold you for 48 hours, or long enough for ICE to come pick you up, send you to an ICE detention center, and possibly deport you. In 2014 - many counties stopped honoring ICE holds in Oregon including Multnomah county.

## **On the south border**

By 2020, CBP was already using more than 135 drones, with plans to procure 460. Nearly 600 operators were trained to fly them, and the agency aimed to double that number in 2021 with a training program in West Virginia.<sup>32</sup> These machines can fly autonomously and have the ability to surreptitiously monitor what's happening on the ground. They are controlled through handheld devices. Since 2016, CBP has expressed interest in developing drones with facial recognition capabilities.

## **Biometrics**

Biometrics are physical characteristics used to identify people, such as fingerprints, DNA, facial recognition, voice recognition, and iris scans. DHS is rapidly expanding the types of biometrics it collects and the places it collects them, often without permission.

The new border wall is no longer just a concrete and metal barrier, but instead a sprawling network of interconnected systems—drones, surveillance towers, license plate scanners, databases, and more—meant to monitor all aspects of migration and control all activity along the Southwest border. The system as designed is intended to be total: Every person, every car, every animal trekking across the desert would raise an alarm, bringing border patrol agents and leading to more confrontations, more arrests, and more deportations.

This form of using surveillance through technology is very concerning, due both to privacy concerns and to the demonstrated technical shortcomings of biometric technology. Facial recognition use by police has already resulted in false positives and wrongful arrests.

City council should conduct an audit of different databases in Multnomah County where ICE exchanges information with other entities.

Thank you