

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition

The logo for the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC) is a black and white illustration. It features a hand holding a key, a bird in flight, and a house with a chimney. The letters 'mpac' are written in a stylized font above the house.

May 12, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Rep Warren and honorable members of the criminal justice and public safety committee. My name is Jan Collins and I am assistant director for the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. I am here today to speak in favor of LD 1592: An Act To Increase Privacy and Security by Prohibiting the Use of Facial Surveillance by Certain Government Employees and Officials.

MPAC's mission is to support Maine's incarcerated citizens, their families, and friends in their struggle with Maine's criminal justice system. Our purpose is to reduce Maine's use of incarceration by creating a criminal justice system that is ethical, humane, and restorative in nature.

I am not much of a photographer, but when I do occasionally take a few photos and upload them to my computer, I label the people in the photos. The Photos program on my computer uses facial recognition to suggest names for the people in the photograph. The more pictures I take of a particular person the more accurate the suggestion. But, sometimes even with lots of photos the suggestion made by the computer is bizarre. I look at the suggestion and say to myself (maybe out loud) What? How could you possibly think that? (Yes, I talk to my computer.)

Cameras are ubiquitous today. Even out in the middle of the woods you may come across a game cam. If you knock on someone's door you may be on their surveillance camera. Some of those cameras are recreational, some for security, and some for science. None of them should be for government surveillance. Our government should not be spying on average citizen's going about their daily work. It exposes all of us to the imperfections in technology, to the possibility of mistaken identity and to accusations of criminal activity that we did not commit.

I am particularly concerned that facial recognition technology's imperfections are lopsided posing a grave danger to the people who are already over policed and adding to the inequities of the criminal legal system for people of color.

But, it is not just people of color, it is also children and the elderly that the facial recognition technology frequently mis-identifies. Although I do not yet fit the category of elderly, I can see it from here and the idea of being wrongly accused in my sunset years does not appeal to me.

The [US government studies](#) have confirmed the biases in facial recognition technology calling in to question the efficacy of its use. I ask you to do the same. This technology is more detrimental than beneficial and should be banned.

Please support LD 1592: An Act To Increase Privacy and Security by Prohibiting the Use of Facial Surveillance by Certain Government Employees and Officials.

Sincerely,

Jan M. Collins

janmariecollins57@gmail.com

Jan Collins
East Wilton

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