

Senate Education

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SB25-143 Extend Prohibition on School Facial Recognition

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Jordyn Merritt Amend themselves	I call on my Colorado legislators to amend the ban of facial recognition from schools, so that it contains no exceptions under which students can be subject to facial recognition. I believe that it is inappropriate, invasive, and deeply unethical to be subjecting minors in schools to facial recognition technology, both for the reasons of its bias against non-white students which endangers them in what should be safe places of learning and because collecting the biometric data of children is deeply wrong. Having technology in schools which tracks facial expressions and body movements is dystopian on its own, and especially when it can be used as part of over-the-top punishments of students for even minor rule breaking or simply using the restroom too often. Even if this system was perfect I would find it invasive and inappropriate, but these systems have proven to be vulnerable to cyber attacks which could cause the highly sensitive information of children and teachers to be leaked to malicious actors, as well as simply to errors that can falsely call for children to be arrested or added to watchlists. Please, protect Colorado schools from these unnecessary risks and invasions by banning facial recognition from schools with no exceptions.
Alexander Bryan Amend themselves	Facial recognition has no place in schools. Privacy, once given away, is very difficult to get back. These tools will not make us safer.
Briana Iacia Amend themselves	Facial recognition is an unethical experiment, and using it to scan, analyze, and collect sensitive biometric information on tens of thousands of students, parents, teachers, and staff puts us all in danger. Facial recognition technology isn't safe. It's biased, and more likely to misidentify students of color. It's invasive, enabling anyone with access to the system to watch people's body movements, analyze facial expressions, monitor who speaks with whom, and even track how many times someone goes to the bathroom. I am deeply concerned about cases where school administrators are using this technology to target students for being late or for minor rule breaking. Marginalized students are more likely to end up on watch lists or to get falsely arrested because of an error in the system. I'm calling on Colorado legislators to protect students by fully banning facial recognition from schools, with no exceptions.
Josh Reynolds Amend	Facial recognition is an unethical experiment, and using it to scan, analyze, and collect sensitive biometric information on tens of thousands of students, parents, teachers, and staff puts us all in danger. Facial recognition technology isn't safe. It's

<p>themselves</p>	<p>biased, and more likely to misidentify students of color. It's invasive, enabling anyone with access to the system to watch people's body movements, analyze facial expressions, monitor who speaks with whom, and even track how many times someone goes to the bathroom. I am deeply concerned about cases where school administrators are using this technology to target students for being late or for minor rule breaking. Marginalized students are more likely to end up on watch lists or to get falsely arrested because of an error in the system. I'm calling on Colorado legislators to protect students by fully banning facial recognition from schools, with no exceptions.</p>
<p>Stephen Wineteer Amend themselves</p>	<p>Facial recognition technology has been found to be biased & is not fully accurate. It's an invasive & immature technology. The ban should stay in effect without exceptions. Please ensure that it does.</p>
<p>Signe Hawley Murray For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Signe Hawley Murray, and I am writing today in strong support of Senate Bill SB25-143, which extends the prohibition on biometric surveillance technology in schools while allowing for limited exceptions. While we want our schools to evolve with the 21st century and embrace innovation, implementing biometric surveillance without adequate regulation or oversight is not only irresponsible—it is unjust and risks causing irreparable harm.</p> <p>Throughout my career at the intersection of education, design, and innovation, I have witnessed the transformative power of public education. I have worked with Denver Public Schools for seven years and currently support a large education NGO, focusing on data and analytics to ensure students thrive and have access to economic and social mobility. My work is grounded in the belief that public education is a fundamental human right, and for that right to be fully realized, schools must remain spaces for curiosity, exploration, and learning - not testing grounds for invasive biometric surveillance and facial recognition, guised as an opportunity for innovative learning or school safety.</p> <p>Despite the claims that biometric surveillance will enhance school security, research does not support this assumption. A 2022 report from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) found that facial recognition technology is often inaccurate, particularly for students of color, leading to misidentifications with harmful consequences. Other studies, including research from Georgetown Law's Center on Privacy & Technology, have raised concerns about racial bias, misidentification, and the disproportionate targeting of marginalized students. Given that Black and Hispanic students are already disproportionately disciplined, the introduction of flawed technology could exacerbate these disparities.</p> <p>Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that biometric surveillance improves school safety. A 2020 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found no clear link between surveillance technologies and a reduction in school shootings</p>

	<p>or violent incidents. In fact, excessive surveillance has been shown to increase student anxiety, create a climate of distrust, and shift schools toward punitive disciplinary practices rather than fostering supportive learning environments.</p> <p>Research on the use of biometrics in education further raises concerns. Studies on machine learning technologies tracking facial movements, eye gazing, body movements, and even brainwave signals highlight significant ethical risks. For example, "Facial Expression Recognition in Classrooms: Ethical Considerations and Proposed Guidelines for Affect Detection in Educational Settings" (Banzon, Beever, & Taub, 2023) examines the risks of using these technologies to track students' emotions and argues that their use should be curtailed in applied educational contexts until their impact is fully understood. Similarly, a 2019 study by Hirt et al. on facial emotion recognition found no reliable correlation between this technology and students' self-reported emotional states, suggesting that assumptions about students' emotions based on facial expressions may not be accurate.</p> <p>A 2021 review of biometric technology in education (Hernandez-de-Menendez et al.) acknowledges the potential benefits of biometric tools in managing identities, tracking attendance, and analyzing student performance. However, the review also stresses that data security and privacy issues remain the biggest challenges. Until these concerns are adequately addressed, the application of biometric surveillance technology in schools should be approached with extreme caution.</p> <p>Even for the narrow exceptions outlined in this bill, there is significant research indicating that biometric surveillance in schools should be curtailed until stronger data privacy protections are in place. There is evidence that clearly shows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Biometric data protection remains a significant challenge. Studies emphasize the need for comprehensive safeguards before these technologies are implemented at scale.2. Current biometric technologies, including facial emotion recognition, lack reliable accuracy and have shown no clear correlation with improved student learning or enhanced safety.3. The deployment of biometric surveillance raises substantial ethical issues, including privacy violations, racial profiling, and disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities. <p>For these reasons, even within the scope of the exceptions in SB25-143, there remain significant concerns about biometric surveillance in schools. These technologies need tight regulations, clear guidelines, and effective accountability systems to ensure they</p>
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	<p>are used responsibly. Without these measures, the risks to student privacy, well-being, and equitable and just treatment are far too great.</p> <p>It is also crucial to recognize that once biometric surveillance infrastructure is established, it is difficult to reverse. What begins as a tool for school security could, without regulation, expand into broader surveillance of students and school communities, infringing on privacy and civil liberties. At a minimum, implementing clear safeguards around facial recognition technology is a reasonable and necessary step.</p> <p>While I would support a permanent ban on biometric surveillance in schools, I recognize that SB25-143 takes an important step in the right direction. By maintaining critical restrictions while allowing narrowly defined safety-related exceptions, this bill helps protect students while ensuring responsible oversight.</p> <p>I urge the committee to pass SB25-143 to keep schools places of learning, discovery, and growth—not surveillance. We owe it to our students to protect their rights and ensure that emerging technologies are implemented with strong safeguards in place.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
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