



THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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**Black, Latino/a and Asian Caucus Endorses
'POST Act' NYPD Surveillance Oversight Bill**

City Hall, NY – Today, the New York City Council's Black, Latino/a and Asian Caucus (BLAC) announced its endorsement of the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act, a bill to increase transparency and oversight of the New York Police Department's (NYPD's) use of sophisticated new surveillance technologies and information sharing networks to identify and track New Yorkers.

The POST Act requires the NYPD to disclose basic information about its surveillance and the safeguards in place to protect the privacy and civil liberties of New Yorkers. Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson carefully crafted this bill to balance law enforcement and national security concerns with the need for transparency and democratic accountability. BLAC's endorsement highlights the threat that unchecked surveillance particularly poses to communities of color and Muslim and Immigrant New Yorkers.

SEE:

POST Act Bill Text ([Int. 0487-2018](#))

[City Leaders Say They Stand with Muslims & Immigrants, But Do They Mean it?](#)

[Keeping eyes on NYPD surveillance: Time for the City Council to increase scrutiny of Stingrays and other technology](#)

Support for the bill follows numerous revelations about the NYPD's expanding use of powerful surveillance equipment. The NYPD arsenal includes "Stingrays" - fake cell towers that track the location and communications of every phone in a targeted neighborhood. The department also uses military-grade X-ray vans, which utilize radiation to see through walls and inside cars.

These powerful tools sweep up information about police targets and law-abiding New Yorkers alike. In response, the POST Act requires the NYPD to create an "impact and use policy" for surveillance technologies now in use as well as any new technologies purchased in the future. Currently, the City Council has no oversight of such purchases if made with federal grants or private donations.



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“I’m proud to have introduced the POST Act in the NYC Council which is a reasonable and balanced approach to respecting individual’s civil rights while ensuring that the NYPD provides information to the public on technology used to keep New Yorkers safe,” said **City Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson**. “For too long, predominately communities of color have been surveilled and felt the pressure of invasion of privacy at local houses of worship and other locations by law enforcement. While there has been progress through court litigation and settlements, these same communities deserve to be safe and not face the threat of being under surveillance due to ethnicity or religion. New Yorkers deserve to know the technology used by the NYPD that relates to its ongoing work fighting against terrorism and acts of violence against New York. The bill requires annual reports that include information on surveillance technology such as the description, capabilities, rules, processes, guidelines, and any safeguards and security measures designed to protect the information collected. I’m thankful for the tireless advocacy of the Brennan Center, NYCLU and CAIR-NY to ensure that protecting individuals rights and enhancing public safety can be achieved simultaneously and are not mutually exclusive. I look forward to working with my Colleagues and all stakeholders to build more support for and pass the POST Act.”

"For far too long, the NYPD has had free reign to use almost any technology, at any time, to spy on New Yorkers," Said CAIR-NY Legal Director Albert Fox Cahn. "Given the history of discriminatory policing against communities of color, I'm grateful for BLAC's leadership in helping to restore civilian oversight of the NYPD."

"Communities of color are too often the victims of unfair and stigmatizing police surveillance," said Angel Diaz, Counsel with the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law. "We are grateful to BLAC for its support of POST Act. Community oversight of the NYPD's surveillance tools is an essential step in restoring public trust."

"For National Action Network, the POST-Act is a part of our continued push for police accountability and transparency," Said National Action Network National Organizer Brandon Terrell Hicks. "The city needs to know what kinds of surveillance technologies are being used by the NYPD"

"The NYPD is a leader in the unchecked use of mass surveillance against the communities the Legal Aid Society represents," said Jerome Greco, a Digital Forensics Attorney at the Legal Aid Society. "BLAC's endorsement of the POST Act is an important step forward to require transparency for the operation of these powerful technological tools."

"As public defenders, we are deeply concerned about the undisclosed and unregulated use of surveillance tools in investigations against our clients and communities of color," said Lisa Schreibersdorf Executive Director of Brooklyn Defender Services. "The secrecy prevents accountability and increases the over-monitoring of marginalized New Yorkers. I thank Council Member Vanessa Gibson and the BLAC for supporting the POST ACT (Intro 0487). This is common-sense legislation that will create measures of transparency so that policymakers and the public can more fairly evaluate it."



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About the Black, Latino/a, Asian Caucus

The City Council's Black, Latino, and Asian (BLA) Caucus consist of 26 of the 51 Members of the City Council. The Caucus convenes to make sure that issues of particular concern to the City's Black, Latino, and Asian communities are being addressed through the legislative, oversight, and budgetary powers of the City Council. The Chairs of the Caucus are Council Members I. Daneek Miller and Ydanis Rodriguez. The Caucus is managed by Executive Director Corey Ortega.

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