



D E N S H Ō

*The Japanese American Legacy Project*

January 24, 2020

Dear Members of the Senate Rules Committee:

We, Densho — an organization dedicated to preserving the testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II — are writing to urge this Committee to **oppose the Facial Recognition bill SB 6280**.

As has been conveyed to Senator Nguyen and the Senate EET Committee, we are concerned that the protections in SB 6280 do not go far enough, and will open the door to future abuse. Widespread use of facial recognition technology following the lowest possible standards does not bode well for communities who continue to be over-surveilled and unfairly targeted. **We ask the Committee to support a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology** to allow for a reasonable, equitable framework to address concerns about accuracy, impacts and accountability to be developed.

The story of Japanese incarceration and the decades of racial discrimination and government surveillance against Japanese Americans that preceded it has never been more relevant. Today, custodial detention lists take the form of massive databases created with powerful technologies such as facial recognition. Weak protections allow law enforcement to disproportionately surveil historically marginalized communities with racially-biased and inaccurate technology. Moreover, even if facial recognition technology were completely unbiased and accurate, its use poses the threat of increased unlawful surveillance. Experts — including the federal government itself — have proven that facial recognition technology is particularly inaccurate for people of color, women, trans people, and young and old people.

We believe that Washington state needs strong laws that actually protect all our communities. Unfortunately, SB 6280 will not achieve that goal. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Signed,

Geoff Froh, Deputy Director

*Preserving the past, inspiring the future*