



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

*Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland*

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## **Testimony IN SUPPORT of SB 476 – Facial Recognition Privacy Protection Act**

**To: Senator Dolores G. Kelley, Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee**

**From: Jim Caldiero, co-Chair, Immigration Task Force, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland**

**Date: March 11, 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony **in support of SB 476 – Facial Recognition Privacy Protection Act**

We have all seen the Hollywood thrillers where law enforcement agents, racing against time, scan the faces of every passenger at Grand Central Terminal, a computer screen whizzing through images until a match is found and agents swoop down and capture the terrorist averting a catastrophe. The problem, of course, is that Hollywood isn't Howard or Harford counties and federal studies have shown that facial recognition systems routinely misidentify people of color – African Americans and Asian Americans – 10 to 100 times more than Caucasian Americans.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology has found that most facial recognition software used by police departments and federal agencies are inherently biased, falsely identifying African American and Asian faces at alarming rates when compared to white Americans, with the greatest error rate among Native Americans.

Despite the bias, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is using the technology to sift through millions of state driver's license databases to identify targets for immigration detention and deportation. Maryland's encouragement of immigrants' obtaining driver's license, which began in 2013 as a measure to ensure cooperation between the immigrant community and law enforcement and to ensure road safety, could be turned on its head if the unintended consequence of ICE trolling our records without judicial warrants is allowed to continue.

The use of biased technology to locate Marylanders regardless of their status is dangerous and violates our right to privacy. It will engender continued fear among our immigrant neighbors and lead to less cooperation between immigrant communities and law enforcement agents, thus making all Maryland communities less safe.

I understand that the Trump administration has retaliated against states such as New York for their attempts to limit cooperation with ICE. But limiting access to facial recognition services is more general, not specific to immigration and should not face the same retaliatory action.

I share my faith with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland and all of us affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. The indiscriminate use of obviously biased, routinely incorrect facial recognition software runs counter to this value and our constitutional right to privacy, to be secure in one's person without cause and the oversight of a judicial warrant.

I encourage you to support SB 476.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Caldiero, Ellicott City