

Good morning. I'm Michael Connor, Executive Director of Open MIC, a non-profit that works to foster corporate accountability in the tech sector. I am here on behalf of Harrington Investments to move Proposal Number 7, which seeks an independent study of Rekognition and the extent to which this facial recognition technology threatens privacy or civil rights, and disproportionately impacts people of color, immigrants and activists in the United States and worldwide.

We believe the company's management and Board have failed to exercise fiduciary oversight by inadequately assessing the risks posed by Rekognition.

For example, researchers at MIT have found that Rekognition demonstrates gender and racial bias and is far more likely to misidentify women and people with dark skin than white men. While the company disputes that research, as of December it had not submitted its algorithm for independent testing by the National Institute of Standards and Technology while peer companies – like Microsoft – have done so. Many experts and lawmakers have questioned whether the technology should be used at all, even if it is 100% accurate.

The company has acknowledged that it does not audit Rekognition customers, giving it little insight into the risks posed by use of the product. In a recent PBS documentary, AWS CEO Andy Jassy said – quote - "I don't think we know the total number of police departments that are using facial recognition technology." Rekognition could exacerbate existing systemic racial injustice, as people of color, incorrectly identified as violent criminals, would be at greater risk of police violence during a pursuit or arrest.

A number of U.S. municipalities and states have banned government use of facial recognition. It's difficult to reconcile the company's support for regulation—and acknowledgement of the potential negative impacts of the technology—with its willingness to risk these impacts by selling Rekognition in an unregulated environment.

Trust is fundamental to Amazon's brand and business. The company must do more to assess the risks of its Rekognition technology. We urge a vote FOR Proposal Number 7.