



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Assessing CBP's Use of Facial Recognition Technology

July 27, 2022

Today's discussion is an opportunity to better understand how CBP uses facial recognition technology to secure the homeland and the measures or policies in place to ensure people's privacy is protected. It is also an important opportunity to further understand the concerns surrounding bias in the use of the technology. The Committee has followed this topic closely for a long time.

In 2019 and 2020, we held hearings with representatives from CBP, the Transportation Security Administration, the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the U.S. Secret Service, as well as the National Institute of Standards and Technology. At that time, several DHS components were in the process of expanding their use of facial recognition technology. These two hearings provided insight into the Department's plan to use biometric technology to automate traveler processing while increasing security. Facial recognition technology has improved since then.

Industry continues to enhance the accuracy, speed, and performance of the systems and algorithms used by the Federal government. DHS has also significantly expanded its rollout. CBP has now fully deployed facial recognition technology for travelers entering the United States at all international airports. In addition, 26 airports are now using this technology for individuals departing the United States. Despite these advances, concerns regarding privacy and bias remain.

I am troubled that CBP has not yet ensured that travelers are appropriately notified of their ability to opt out of using the facial recognition technology. I visited a biometric exit gate in Las Vegas earlier this year, and no such signage was present. CBP and airport stakeholders must post proper signage notifying travelers of their ability to opt out. CBP must also ensure that facial recognition systems and algorithms do not lead to biased outcomes based on the race, gender, or age.

As facial biometric technology becomes more common, we must continue to examine the agency's implementation and implications of its use. Our witnesses today have closely tracked CBP's deployment of facial recognition technology. I look forward to their insights about the issues surrounding CBP's current and future plans for this technology.

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