

Berkeley City Council Candidate Letter

“Council: Oppose Mass Surveillance”

October 6, 2026

Honorable Berkeley Mayor Ishii, City Council Members:

We the undersigned are certified candidates in district races across the city. We share the understanding that public safety and human rights are not in conflict, and in fact we cannot have one without the other.

For this reason, we call on you to take no further steps to increase the amount of mass surveillance in Berkeley and to instead dismantle the existing apparatus. In this letter we will explain why this group of candidates takes this forthright position.

Proponents argue that the intent of the technology is “targeted and reactive policing.” However, it will result in the capture of personal information about all of Berkeley’s residents and visitors. No policy or contractual language can guarantee against its misuse. The flood of national scandal involving Flock Safety demonstrates this sad truth.

Council members, it is good to hear public statements from some of you who formerly supported the contract with Flock that you are reconsidering your position. Flock’s credibility has been impeached nationally, and they have lied to Berkeley leaders by misrepresenting their data sharing mistakes and by saying they did not work with ICE. However, a number of the most prominent alternative providers, including Axon and Motorola/Vigilant Solutions, openly maintain contracts with ICE or Homeland Security. For Berkeley to contract with such companies would directly violate Berkeley’s Sanctuary City Contracting Law, exposing the City to legal and financial liability.

You have been repeatedly warned that a federal judicial warrant would trump any City policies or contract language with vendors; a demand issued by a FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) court would be secret, so the Council would be unaware of the intrusion, and therefore not even have the opportunity to cancel the surveillance program. Even if the City operated its own cameras and stored the data on its own servers, the same vulnerabilities are present. With two Berkeley people recently kidnapped by ICE, this is a risk we cannot take.

Berkeley City Council Candid

“Council: Oppose Mass Surv

As candidates, we come from a variety of perspectives. Some of us are contesting others at the ballot box. But we all agree that this issue is bigger than politics or our personal advancement. Collecting information on the whereabouts and movements of our people is not the route to public safety. And to risk feeding Trump’s monstrous deportation machine, even unintentionally, is impermissible for our city’s government.

We will leave you with one final concern. The RFP contemplates a council decision date as soon as November 17. This date is two weeks after the council elections, and about two weeks before at least two new council members will be sworn into office. If the lame-duck council takes up this crucial issue in its waning days, that will be widely perceived as an undemocratic move and flouting the expressed will of the electorate. In the interests of a fair and inclusive process, we urge you to defer the decision until the new members are seated.

cc: City Manager Paul Buddenhagen, Berkeley Police Chief Jen Louis, City Auditor Jenny Wong, City Attorney Farimah Brown, Director of Police Accountability, PAB Chair Josh Cayetano

Signed:



Aidan Hill



Daria Wrubel



Majdi Gaith
Abuhamdieh



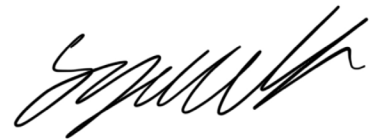
Mari Mendonca



Michael Wallman



Moni Gangopadhyay



Syrak Micael

For more information:
Berkeley Against Mass Surveillance (BAMS)
<https://bams.network/>
<https://bams.network/contact/>