



## Dayton City Commission Meeting

December 6, 2023

Mayor Mims and Commissioners Joseph, Shaw, Fairchild, and Turner-Sloss:

My name is Dr. Rhea Debussy, and my pronouns are she/her. I'm the Director of External Affairs for Equitas Health. As you're likely aware, Equitas Health is a non-profit community health center and one of the largest LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS serving healthcare organizations in the country. Each year, we serve tens of thousands of patients in Ohio, Texas, Kentucky, and West Virginia, and since 1984, we have been working to advance "care for all."<sup>1</sup> I'm thankful for the opportunity to address you all today. I'm here to provide testimony in opposition to the proposed allocation of nearly \$1 million for police surveillance technology, as such technology has a detailed history of being used for the systemic overpolicing of marginalized communities.

As noted by other community organizations in the greater Dayton metropolitan area, there are a number of concerns with such a massive expansion in police surveillance technology, and there are very real concerns related both for the civil rights and civil liberties of people living and working in Dayton.<sup>2</sup> As noted by the Brookings Institution, the oversurveillance of communities of color – and *especially* the Black community – has a troubling and well-documented history. Further, such police surveillance technology has been inappropriately used, in recent years, to publicly identify people who have protested against police brutality.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, oversurveillance of members of the LGBTQ+ community has an equally troubling history in our country,<sup>4</sup> and such oversurveillance and overpolicing have contributed to police violence against transgender people<sup>5</sup> and more frequent rates of police interactions for LGBTQ+ people.<sup>6</sup>

In short, investing such a large sum of money for police surveillance technology is deeply problematic, given how such technology is so often used for the systemic overpolicing of marginalized communities. As such, Equitas Health firmly opposes the proposed allocation of nearly \$1 million for police surveillance technology, given the racial justice and LGBTQ+ justice concerns that would result from this expenditure. We urge all members of the City Commission to vote against this proposal and to support justice in public safety.

Respectfully submitted,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://equitashealth.com/about-us/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/dayton-to-vote-tonight-on-major-expansion-of-license-plate-readers-for-police/AVAVJXV7ZBF3TMOTQD7BV5ZJ2E/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/police-surveillance-and-facial-recognition-why-data-privacy-is-an-imperative-for-communities-of-color/>

<sup>4</sup> See Douglas Charles' (2015) *Hoover's War on Gays: Exposing the FBI's "Sex Deviates" Program*.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/6/23/21295432/police-black-trans-people-violence>

<sup>6</sup> <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/lgbq-people-six-times-more-likely-than-general-public-to-be-stopped-by-police/>