

Statement for the Amazon Annual Shareholders' Meeting 2020

Good morning. My name is Michael Connor. I am Executive Director of Open MIC, a non-profit that works to foster greater 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 or violates 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, it has 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, including Woodrow Hartzog as its widespread use will inhibit freedom of movement and association and practicing of religion.

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." In the hands of police customers, 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. This technology will lead to increased targeting and prosecution of people of color for crimes they did not commit, as admissibility of this kind of biometric data has not been legally established.

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 actively risk these impacts by selling Rekognition in an unregulated environment.

Trust is fundamental to Amazon's brand and its business. The company must do much more to persuade customers and shareholders that Rekognition can be trusted.

We urge a vote **FOR** Proposal Number 7.