House of Commons

Palace of Westminster,

London SW1A 0AA

Dear <Member of Parliament>,

The Home Office are currently investing millions of pounds into the creation of facial biometric recognition systems for the police to use against their custody image databases.

Being taken into custody does not make a person guilty of a crime. Having a custody image is no guarantee a person is a criminal.

According to the former Biometrics Commissioner Alistair McGregor the custody image database includes “hundreds of thousands” of innocent people.

The retention of custody images was ruled unlawful by the High Court in 2012 but nothing has changed.

Under the Policing and Criminal Evidence Act if a person is not convicted of a crime and found to be innocent their biometric fingerprints and DNA are automatically deleted.

The Home Office do not believe the same should be done with a custody image.

The Home Office say police IT systems cannot cope with the task of automatic deletion so a person should apply for a manual deletion which the police can refuse.

Rather than invest to find a solution, the Home Office have chosen to spend tax-payer money in expanding the images into biometrics and recognition technology.

The Home Office believe an image of a person is “generally less intrusive” than their fingerprints and DNA. I disagree. Modern technology, such as automated facial recognition systems, enables a face to be picked out of a crowd with relative ease. A face can be picked out of a crowd and with even greater ease if it has become a facial biometric.

The creation and retention of facial biometrics has never been debated and is not subject to any regulation or legislation.

I am concerned that images of people found to be innocent are left to languish on police databases and are subsequently being made into facial biometrics.

Please challenge the Home Secretary on these issues and call for:

* An end to the retention of innocent people’s custody images.
* An end to the creation of innocent people’s facial biometrics
* The Government’s yet to be published Biometric Strategy to legislate for custody images and facial biometrics to be given the same protections as fingerprints and DNA.

Thank you

YOUR NAME

For more information please visit [www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/all-campaigns/faceoff](http://www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/faceoff)