



Justice in Every Borough.

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Contact:

Redmond Haskins
Director of Media Relations
The Legal Aid Society
rhaskins@legal-aid.org
929.441.2384

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid Calls on Watchdogs to Investigate Adams Administration’s Rollout of Recent Surveillance Technologies in Violation of the POST Act

Adams Administration Failed to Provide New Yorkers Public Review and Comment on Technologies Including K5 Security Robot, DigiDog, and StarChase GPS Tracking Guns

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society**, in a recently issued [letter](#), called on the New York City Department of Investigation, office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department to [investigate](#) the Adams Administration’s rollout of recent surveillance technologies that violated the Police Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act, including the robot surveillance dog already rejected once by New Yorkers under the prior administration.

The POST Act increases the transparency and oversight over the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) use of sophisticated new surveillance technologies and information sharing networks by requiring the NYPD to disclose basic information about the surveillance tools it uses and the safeguards in place to protect the privacy and civil liberties of New Yorkers.

Specifically, the POST Act requires the NYPD to issue impact and use policies (IUPs) for each surveillance technology it uses. It also requires the NYPD to propose and publish an IUP on the department’s website “at least 90 days prior to the use of any new surveillance technology.” The public then “shall have 45 days to submit comments on such policy” to the NYPD Commissioner.

On April 11, 2023, the NYPD announced new surveillance technologies it would start using immediately, including a K5 autonomous security robot, Boston Dynamics’ robotic DigiDog, and StarChase GPS tracking guns. Other recently announced technologies also include a [digital fingerprint scanning technology](#) that will allow NYPD officers to scan fingerprints straight from their cell phones and a new “augmented reality” technology available on some NYPD officers’ phones that will allow them to “better visualize that data [contained in the Domain Awareness System]”, a massive citywide network of sensors, databases, devices, software, and infrastructure that the police use for investigations.

There were no new impact and use policies issued for these technologies, nor was the mandatory 45 days for the public to comment on them permitted. Seemingly to avoid these requirements, the NYPD updated five of the thirty-six previously issued IUPs to reference the new tools, even though each of these tools are different from the technologies under which the NYPD has categorized them. The updates to the five existing IUPs are inadequate to fulfill the NYPD's responsibility to describe the policies that govern its possession and use of new technologies, in violation of the requirements of the POST Act.

In the case of DigiDog specifically, New Yorkers have already rejected this technology. The NYPD acquired and returned it in 2021 after it was used to target and [terrify](#) people in public housing. The public clearly does not want this dystopian robot, but the NYPD are trying to circumvent the proper steps required by law in order to add it to their surveillance arsenal without community input.

“The NYPD introduced five new technologies in 2023 in clear violation of the POST Act,” said **Shane Ferro, staff attorney with the Digital Forensics Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “These technologies were not introduced 90 days before they went into use, and no 45-day public comment period was offered. There are many open questions about the rules governing these new technologies' use, the oversight of these technologies, and the impact they will have on communities. This is a clear violation of both the letter and the intent of existing law, and we urge the NYPD-OIG to conduct an immediate investigation to hold the police department to their legal obligations.”

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