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

Statement in Response to Mayor Adams' Announcement that Gun Detection Systems Will Soon Be Deployed in Select NYC Subway Stations

(NEW YORK, NY) - Diane Akerman, Staff Attorney with the Digital Forensics Unit at The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in response to Mayor Eric Adams' [announcement](#) that gun detection systems will soon be deployed in select New York City subway stations:

“Shortly after the Mayor [announced](#) the gun detection system pilot earlier this year, multiple media outlets confirmed what we already know: that these invasive technologies are [ineffective and frequently trigger false alarms](#). Even the CEO of a weapon detection-system company acknowledged that subways were not a ‘[good use-case](#)’ for the technology.

“New Yorkers want a safe subway system that works. These scanners will create significant inconvenience, adding congestion and delays to an already overburdened system.

“Even worse, they are an unjustified invasion of privacy, and put people’s lives - particularly those of our clients, the majority of whom are people of color - at risk from the panic that an inevitable false alarm would induce.

“The Mayor has opted to move forward before even posting a final policy, in violation of the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology Act, shirking his legal obligations under the law.

“This Administration’s commitment to unreliable, unproven, and invasive policing technology comes at the expense of all New Yorkers, and does not address the root cause of public safety. We’re considering all of our options should this wrongheaded plan move forward.”

Background

In May, Legal Aid submitted [comments](#) and [condemned](#) the NYPD for violating the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act with its Draft Impact and Use Policy (IUP) to deploy invasive and ineffective weapon scanning systems in New York City’s subway system.

The POST Act increases the transparency and oversight over the NYPD’s use of new surveillance technologies and information sharing networks by requiring the department to disclose basic information about these tools and the safeguards in place to protect the privacy and civil liberties of New Yorkers. This IUP for Electromagnetic Weapons Detection System violates the POST Act because it:

- fails to provide any information about a potential vendor or details about the technology’s capabilities;
- does not adequately address legitimate privacy concerns and safeguarding data, nor does it recognize the need for retaining information for discovery purposes;
- is insufficient in its outlining of how NYPD personnel will be trained on this new technology;
- fails to acknowledge in any way the history and harm of years of discriminatory NYPD practices and disproportionate use of surveillance technology against already overpoliced communities. Black and brown residents in NYC are more likely to take public transportation to work than white residents, and because these weapons scanners will undoubtedly lead to more police interactions with the public, New Yorkers of color will be disproportionately placed in dangerous, high-tension situations with officers; and
- is an unconstitutional intrusion into the rights of New Yorkers who have the right to freely move about the city – go to work, to the grocery store, to visit friends – without being treated like suspects of a crime for simply using public transportation.

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