

Letter From The Executive Director

Friends,

Looking back on 2023 fills me with gratitude for S.T.O.P.'s strides in challenging harmful technologies across New York and beyond. Our legislative wins, groundbreaking litigation, and leading research all pushed back against the abusive and discriminatory technologies impacting our communities.

Last year saw our most aggressive legislative agenda yet in Albany. Our 10-bill **Banning Big Brother** package was the first comprehensive anti-surveillance and A.I. accountability agenda in the United States. Working with the Privacy N.Y. coalition, we fought for first-of-its-kind measures, like bans on sprawling geofence warrants (which can track thousands of people's locations through a single court order) and the fake social media profiles police routinely use.

But bills don't enforce themselves once they become law. That's why we brought the first two lawsuits under the 2020 New York City biometric privacy law we helped write, suing Amazon and Starbucks for illegally collecting New Yorkers' biometric data. The cases not only could impose millions in penalties, but could reshape biometric tracking across the city. Still, our favorite opponent in court remains the NYPD, and we kept up our fight to hold them accountable to New Yorkers with three Freedom of Information lawsuits.

Our advocacy work continued to make waves. Working with partners, we fought to ban facial recognition in K-12 schools across New York. And we branched out into new areas of policing as well. Responding to the heartbreaking police killing of Elijah McClain, we worked to outlaw the pseudoscientific diagnosis used to excuse his killing: Excited delirium. Excitingly, it's now illegal for officials in California to cite this cause of death, bringing us a step closer to accountability for deadly police violence.

None of this would be possible without our incredible staff, board members, interns, volunteers, pro-bono partners, and donors. I'm grateful for the community we have built together, and I'm so excited for everything you'll help us do next.



Sincerely, Albert Fox Cahn. Esq. Executive Director



Litigation

S.T.O.P.'s legal team worked without bounds in 2023. **We secured one of the largest victories in S.T.O.P.'s history.** We sued Amazon, Starbucks, and NYPD. And we broke through in a fight for NYPD surveillance records.

A MONUMENTAL VICTORY

In 2018, before S.T.O.P. was an idea, our founder Albert Fox Cahn helped file a federal class-action lawsuit against the City of New York. It was on behalf of women who, after being arrested, were forced to remove religious head coverings—an act in deep violation of faith and religious freedom that leaves individuals feeling exposed. The lawsuit prompted the NYPD to change its policy to allow religious head coverings in mugshot photos. Years later, to close out 2023, S.T.O.P.'s legal team and co-counsel won a \$17.5 million settlement. For at least 3,600 affected New Yorkers, the settlement is justice that amounts to anywhere between \$7,000 and \$13,000 in individual compensation.



Litigation

BIG LEAGUE LAWSUITS

S.T.O.P. brought three more heavy hitters to court in the spring of 2023. First, we **filed a class-action lawsuit against Amazon** relating to their "Just Walk Out" technology that tracks customers' movements in Amazon Go stores. New York City's biometric notice law requires businesses to warn customers whenever their biometric information is being collected; something Amazon failed to do. The same violation was committed by Starbucks, who uses "Just Walk Out" in select NYC stores. **We sued them, too.** Both suits were originally filed in the Southern District of New York but were later combined into one case filed in the Western District of Washington.

NO RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT



Between taking on corporate giants, our legal team still went after the NYPD. **Three times.** Each was in relation to Freedom of Information Law requests, which the NYPD has a habit of denying. Nevertheless, in all three instances, S.T.O.P. succeeded in uncovering sought-after documents. This is familiar territory. Back in 2021, we sued NYPD on behalf of Amnesty International USA for records on NYPD's facial recognition surveillance of 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. It proved successful in late 2023, when NYPD was forced to begin providing records.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

The last significant development in S.T.O.P.'s 2023 litigative proceedings came when our 2020 Thomson Reuters lawsuit was successfully given class certification. The suit seeks damages for the millions of Californians whose data was sold by Thomson Reuters without consent, alleging violation of California's Common Law Right to Publicity and Unfair Competition Law.





Advocacy & Legislation

S.T.O.P. found legislative success on both coasts of the United States in 2023. This goes hand in hand with our passionate advocacy campaigns that keep pressure on lawmakers to face the issues. Here are some highlights from this past year.

BANNING BIG BROTHER

In January, S.T.O.P. hosted our first ever lobby day in Albany to launch **Banning Big Brother: New York's Surveillance Sanctuary State Blueprint**. Sponsored by nearly 40 leading privacy and civil rights groups, this anti-surveillance campaign includes a legislative package of ten bills designed to protect New Yorkers from the harms of mass surveillance.

- Reverse Location and Reverse
 Keyword Search Prohibition Act
- Modernize the PPPL Act
- Stop Online Police Fake Accounts and Keep Everyone Safe Act
- New York For All Act
- OMNY Privacy Act

- Unofficial DNA Database Ban
- DNA Phenotyping Ban
- Protect Our Privacy "POP" Act (Police Drone Ban)
- Biometrics Ban
- Cell Site Simulator Ban

BAN THE SCAN

In September, the New York State Education Department issued a **statewide regulatory ban on facial recognition in K-12 schools** after years of advocacy against the technology's harms to students. S.T.O.P. welcomed this decision and we have continued to advocate for a full legislative ban on facial recognition and other biometric surveillance in schools across New York State.



That same month, we joined over 30 civil rights groups in submitting a memo of support demanding the New York City Council pass two pending bills banning facial recognition and other biometric technologies in residential buildings and public accommodations, such as stores and arenas. S.T.O.P. and our partners worked for more than two years to bring forward the legislation, which was finally introduced in the City Council in April.

Advocacy & Legislation

In October, 17 civil rights groups, led by S.T.O.P., Amnesty International, New York Civil Liberties Union, the Legal Aid Society, Surveillance Resistance Lab, Fight for the Future, and the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at NYU Law, launched the **Ban The Scan** public advocacy campaign. The digital campaign demanded that New York City Council pass the two aforementioned bills banning biometric surveillance.



In May, S.T.O.P., fellow Ban the Scan partners, and elected officials held a rally at New York City Hall in support of the two bills. The rally was held before the New York City Council Technology and Civil and Human Rights Committees discussed the legislation.

SAYING NO TO PSEUDOSCIENCE

In October, California became the first state **to ban the pseudoscientific "excited delirium"** as a diagnosis and cause of death. The term is widely discredited, but it's often used by police to describe deaths occurring in police custody. The so-called diagnosis was used as defense in the killings of George Floyd, Elijah McClain, and countless other victims of police brutality. The bill outlawing the use of the term was authored by S.T.O.P. and our partners.

VALENTINE'S DAY OF ACTION

In February, S.T.O.P. launched our **Valentine's Day of Action**, where we brought together New Yorkers to send "valentines" to state representatives demanding they break up with police surveillance. The Day of Action was designed to support our Banning Big Brother anti-surveillance legislative campaign for New York State. The campaign called for an end to fake police social media accounts, OMNY surveillance, warrantless drone surveillance, mass geolocation tracking, faulty facial recognition software, using DNA pseudoscience to make police sketches, and more.

Advocacy & Legislation

TICKETING THE NYPD

In February, S.T.O.P. issued our very own bright orange "traffic tickets" to the NYPD to biased enforcement highlight their obstructed license plate laws. In less than 10 minutes, we found half a dozen covered, scratched, or obstructed NYPD license plates in 1 Police Plaza. S.T.O.P. logged the cars with violations and sent complaints to NYPD leadership. This Day of Action accompanied the release of our research report, Obstructed Justice: NYC's Biased License Plate Enforcement, which details how the disproportionately targets NYPD **BIPOC** drivers when (selectively) enforcing obstructed license plate laws.



DEMANDING TRANSPARENCY



In December, S.T.O.P. and other civil rights groups rallied against the NYPD's **repeated violations** of the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act, which requires the NYPD to disclose its surveillance technologies. In the three years since the POST Act's passage, the NYPD has repeatedly and flagrantly violated the surveillance oversight law. Advocates and lawmakers called on the City Council to not only strengthen the POST Act, but also go further by outlawing the most abusive forms of surveillance, including facial recognition and drones.

Prior to the rally, we joined 18 civil rights groups in submitting a sign-on letter to the City Council demanding they pass two amendments that would implement and expand on recommendations from an Office of the Inspector General report highlighting NYPD's noncompliance with the POST Act.

Research

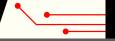
In 2023, **S.T.O.P. published seven research projects.** Our reports bring clarity to issues that can be difficult to understand, educating the public on the real-life impacts of mass surveillance.

From historically marginalized gamers experiencing video game censorship to surveillance tools being used against pregnant people and trans people seeking medical care, our research identified contemporary issues that go overlooked. Often, surveillance technologies are marketed as means to preserve personal safety and wellbeing. Yet, S.T.O.P.'s reports expose the untold harms of surveillance technologies and the threats they pose to privacy, safety, and equality. S.T.O.P.'s research brought attention to online child safety, the consequences of psychological surveillance in schools, traffic camera use in pulling over drivers, and more.



AUTOMATED ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2023, S.T.O.P. also released the **Automated Decision System Regulatory Survey**, a database surveying states and key cities to identify proposed and enacted laws regulating the use of Automated Decision Systems (ADS). ADS's rapid development and dispersal in a multitude of public and private sectors outpaced the legislation protecting citizens from discrimination and civil rights abuses caused by ADS use.



Communications

S.T.O.P.'s communications efforts are essential in making sure **the discriminatory impacts of surveillance remain in the public conversation.** Here are some of our highlights from 2023.

TECH & SOCIETY

This year, S.T.O.P. hosted three exciting panels for our "Tech & Society Salon" discussion series.

In the first panel, *Close Rikers Now*, we joined Chaplain Dr. Victoria Phillips (Visionary V) and Janos Marton (Dream Corps JUSTICE) to critique the techno-solutionist responses to the worsening conditions inside Rikers Island Jail. The panel centered on the state of detainees' health and safety as Mayor Eric Adams and DOC Commissioner Louis Molina implement automated corrections technology and slash re-entry services and oversight measures.

For the second panel, *Close Cop City*, we joined Professor Nicholas Fesette (Emory University) to examine the surveillance, intimidation, & criminalization tactics used against Stop Cop City organizers, activists, & allies. The conversation focused on the resistance strategies adopted to support the movement & protect all those fighting to prevent the deforestation of the Weelaunee Forest & the construction of a police military training facility.

Our third panel, *Surveillance Rx*, explored the development of surveillance tools utilized by medical, wellness, and health-crisis services, and the impact they have on individuals marginalized by systemic ableism. In conversation with Lydia X.Z. Brown, James Kilgore, and Justin Sherman, we discussed the role surveillance played in the criminalization and dehumanization of neurodivergent and disabled communities. You can watch all three recordings on **S.T.O.P.'s YouTube channel**.

DRAG AGAINST DRAGNETS

In 2024, partnering with local NYC drag artist, Esther, we raised awareness about how big data and technology track, out, and criminalize LGBTQIA+ individuals and expression of all kinds. Esther's **digital advocacy video** has received over **600K views** on TikTok.

Communications

COMBATTING CONCERT SURVEILLANCE

In January, we were featured in dozens of articles related to surveillance in New York City's public accommodations. After reports that NYPD recorded the faces of hundreds of attendees at a Drake concert in Harlem, we promptly condemned this incident as a breach of privacy and the abuse of surveillance technology on unknowing concertgoers, releasing an **op-ed** in the Gotham Gazette and gaining press in outlets such as **AP** and **Vice**.



In a similar case of predatory surveillance in public spaces, an attendee at a Madison Square Garden concert was barred from entry due to their employment at a law firm involved in ongoing litigation against the venue. We were quick to denounce this incident and were quoted in various publications including **Rolling Stone** and **CBS News**.

LATE NIGHT REGULARS

S.T.O.P.'s Executive Director Albert Fox Cahn was **featured by John Oliver** of *Last Week Tonight* in a segment discussing AI, algorithmic bias, and the need to reign in and regulate AI-driven tools for hiring purposes. This marks our second appearance on the show after we were highlighted in a 2020 episode on facial recognition!



Communications

---- IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S NYPD!



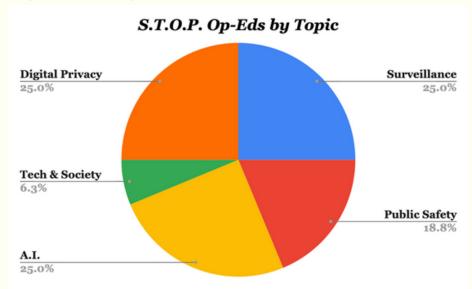
This past year, per Eric Adams' **NYPD** command, the has increased the usage of police drones, surveilling everything from tourists in Times Square to barbecues on Labor Day. We responded with constant, hard-hitting coverage on these wasteful robocops, with our Executive Director, Albert Fox Cahn, coining the nickname "trashcan on wheels" for NYPD's Times Square drone.

STRONG OPINIONS

As NYC's leading voice in the fight against mass surveillance, we never fail to share our thoughts on NYPD misconduct, biometric surveillance, invasive AI, and any other technology-assisted civil rights violations. In fact, we published 27 Op-Eds in local and national publications in last year alone! From **geofence warrants** to **school surveillance**, we continued to put the dangers of mass surveillance in front of the

public eye in 2023.

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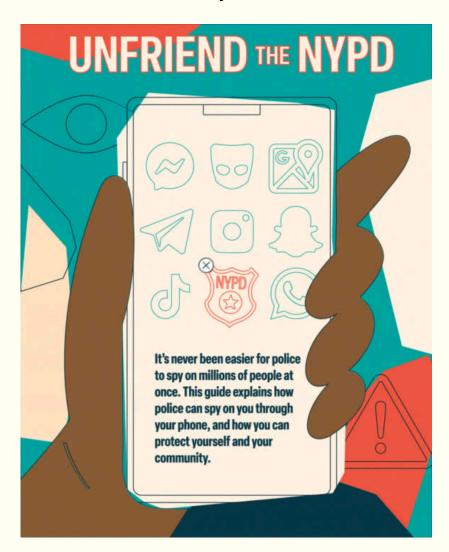


Community Education

In 2023, we stepped into our communities to educate our peers on the growing threats posed by surveillance technologies and tactics. From schools and universities to our organizational partners, our trainings were pivotal in raising awareness and sharing information about how individuals can protect themselves from unwarranted surveillance.

UNFRIEND THE NYPD

In an exciting partnership with the Center for Urban Pedagogy, we released a pamphlet for young adults in New York to show how the NYPD can surveil anyone with a smartphone. This project was made with crucial input from our intended audience and community partners, such as with our friends at Red Hook Initiative, and is a key resource that we share with our community as the NYPD's surveillance tactics persist.



Community Education



This pamphlet also served as a guide for many of our in-person trainings, such as the one we held at The Young Women's Leadership School of Queens. In this training, we discussed with students how surveillance plays a role in the lives of people seeking abortions, especially from rights-restrictive states. As we discussed during this training, many of the tactics employed by the NYPD to conduct smartphone surveillance intersect with the tools used against abortion seekers and their loved ones.



PROTEST SURVEILLANCE AND SAFETY

We continued our work educating activists about the threat surveillance poses to our right to dissent and offered tips on how to stay safe at protests. At Barnard College's Athena Center for Leadership, we held an in-person training with students using our Protest Surveillance & Safety Toolkit. We shared best practices on cellphone, social media, transit, and general protest safety. The training also provided an overview of protesters' right to record police activity and what student activists should do in case of arrest.

2023 Financials

Revenue	Total
Direct Contributions	\$ 100,974
Non-Government Grants	\$ 409,008
Program Sales & Fees	\$ 4,150
Investments Revenue	\$ 17,297
Total Sales Revenue	\$ 900
In-Kind Professional Services	\$ 1,258,695
Cash Revenue	\$ 532,329
In-Kind Professional Services	\$ 1,258,695
Total Revenue	\$ 1,791,024
Expenses	
Salaries & Related Expenses	\$ 788,223
Non-Personnel Expenses	\$ 44,088
Facility Expenses	\$ 3,318
Travel & Conference Expenses	\$ 13,330
Insurance - Non-employee Related	\$ 14,579
Membership Dues - Organization	\$ 661
Other Expenses	\$ 27,802
Cash Expenses	\$ 876,761
In-Kind Professional Services	\$ 1,258,695
Total Expenses	\$ 2,135,456
Net Revenue	\$ (344,432)

2023 Supporters and Partners

FOUNDATIONS

- Ashoka Foundation
- Borealis Philanthropies Disability Inclusion Fund
- Borealis Philanthropies Spark Justice Fund
- Brooklyn Org (Brooklyn Community Foundation)
- David S. Howe Foundation
- FJC A Philanthropic Fund
- Herb Block Foundation
- Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
- Lily Auchincloss Foundation
- MacArthur Foundation
- Omidyar Network
- Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

CORPORATE

DuckDuckGo



ORGANIZATIONS

- Athena Coalition
- Justice Catalyst
- The Carr Center for Human Rights
- Wikimedia Race and Knowledge Equity (WRKE) Fellowship

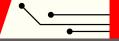


INDIVIDUALS

- Kent Cherny
- Marc Gilman
- Michael Germano
- Natarajan Krishnaswami
- Shelley Floyd
- Ted Bosworth

IN-KIND & PRO BONO

- Emery Celli
- Latham & Watkins
- Quinn Emanuel
- Shearman & Sterling
- Weil, Gotshal, & Manges
- WilmerHale



STAFF

Our researchers, advocates, technologists, and legal experts fuel S.T.O.P.'s work and mission.

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Executive Director

Alan Newcomb

Operations Associate

David Siffert

Legal Director

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Mahima Arya

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors (BOD) oversees S.T.O.P.'s financial management and compliance.

Jenny Lee

General Counsel, Strong Arm Technologies, Inc.

Lauren Wu, Esq.

Head of Privacy and Senior Director of Legal, Regulatory & Compliance for Evidation Health

Nigar Shaikh, Esq.

Board President, Senior Complex Commercial Litigation Associate, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

Sami Rashid

Partner, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP

Samantha Van Doran

Board Secretary, Director of Partnerships, Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The Community Advisory Board (CAB), comprised of key community members and partners, informs and guides the work S.T.O.P. carries out.

Ángel Diaz, Esq.

Counsel to the Liberty and National Security Program, Brennan Center for Justice

Dr. Chris Gillard

Writer, Professor, and Speaker

Derrick "Dwreck" Ingram

Co-Founder, Warriors in the Garden

Diane Akerman

Public Defender, Legal Aid Society's Digital Forensics Unit

Elizabeth Daniel Vazquez

Special Forensic Science Counsel, Brooklyn Defender Services

Fabian Rogers

Constituent Advocate, NYS Senator Jabari Brisport

Gabriella Garcia

Founder, Decoding Stigma

Harsha Panduranga

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Katurah Topps, Esq.

Policy Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Murad Awawdeh

Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition

Rama Issa-Ibrahim

Deputy Public Advocate for Justice, Health Equity & Safety, Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams

Sarah Chu, PhD

Director of Policy and Reform, Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice Cardozo School of Law

JUNIOR BOARD

The Junior Board is a skilled network of young professionals and local activists committed to the S.T.O.P.'s success. They contribute to S.T.O.P.'s mission through fundraising and community outreach activities.

Alec Harmon

Andrew Rainey

Dyllan Brown-Bramble

Justin P'ng

Katherine Wang

Krzyś Chwała

Mackenzie Goulbourne

Patrick K. Lin

Santana Jackson

Tristan Burchett

Urooba Abid

Valerie Shoates













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