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Executive Director

July 13, 2011

The Editor
The Wall Street Journal
1211 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York, 10036

Re: Article "Device Raises Fear of Facial Profiling" July 13, 2011 edition

Dear Sir,

Unfortunately the writer who interviewed me for the above article, Ms. Steel, reported my comments somewhat out of context. I was actually talking about the TSA and their invasive frisks of children and the elderly when I said that agencies may not want to use each and every technique or technology that's available to them, even if the law might technically allow it, because agencies must also consider the public's view of the agency's activities. If the public feels it's too intrusive (again using the TSA as the example) for the benefit claimed, it may not be worth it; that is, the public upset (and consequent loss of public support for police enforcement efforts) may be too high a social cost when compared against the marginal increase in security.

I did say that the iris scan was more likely, in my opinion, to be considered a search under the Fourth Amendment than was applying facial recognition technology to an image of one's face, which is already exhibited to the public. And I did say that developing guidelines for the proper use of such technologies (again, the goal being to increase actual safety without unnecessarily upsetting or offending public norms) calls for moral maturity and responsibility on the part of law enforcement administrators. But again, I was using the TSA as an example of failure in this regard at the time.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director