

ORAL TESTIMONY

Robert Tappan

Executive Director, International Biometrics + Identity Association (IBIA)

Re: Proposed Int. No. 213-A (0213-2026) & Int. No. 428 (0428-2026)

*New York City Council, Committee of Technology
Monday, March 2, 2026; 10:00 am
City Council Offices - Eighth Floor, Hearing Room 2*

Good Morning, Chair De La Rosa and Members of the City Council's Technology Committee. My name is Robert Tappan, and I am Executive Director of the International Biometrics + Identity Association. IBIA is based in Washington, DC, and I'm here today representing the biometrics and identity technologies industry on behalf of many of their customers and end-users who live and work here in New York City — small business owners, hotel operators, retail stores, apartment building owners, and residents — including seniors — who rely on biometric recognition technology every single day to protect their lives, their finances, their livelihoods and their property, as well as to protect those communities in New York City in which they live, shop, work, and serve.

We urge Council Members to oppose Proposed Int. No. 213-A **(0213-2026)** and Int. No. 428 **(0428-2026)**. Whether it's a corner bodega in the Bronx, a jewelry store in Queens, or a hotel or restaurant in Midtown Manhattan, facial recognition is not a luxury — it is a frontline defense against shoplifting, fraud, trespassing and violent crime. These businesses and establishments have been victimized repeatedly, often by repeat offenders who do so blatantly and brazenly.

Biometric and identity technologies allow owners to identify known bad actors before they strike again. Int. No. 213-A **(0213-2026)** would strip that protection entirely, banning identification technology at the very places most vulnerable to repeated theft and assault.

Int. No. 428 (0428-2026) poses an equally serious threat to the safety of New Yorkers at home. For seniors living alone in residential buildings or in assisted-care facilities, for families in neighborhoods with histories of break-ins and other crime, or neighborhoods with street corners that suffer from drug-dealing and gang activity, biometrics and identity technologies provide peace-of-mind, even when a key is lost or a fob is stolen. These systems reassure a tenant, store-owner or individual that the person who just walked through their lobby door is exactly who they say they are. Banning that technology doesn't make buildings safer or more secure — it makes them more vulnerable.



We understand the Council's and citizens' concerns about privacy, and we take those concerns very seriously. But these bills do not regulate biometric technology — they attempt to eliminate it entirely. That is not a balanced or wise approach. It forces small business owners and property managers to choose between compliance with the law and the physical safety of their customers, employees, and tenants, along with the threat of property or inventory loss.

New York's small businesses are still recovering from the economic effects of the COVID pandemic and a very challenging economy. New York's residents, shoppers and store owners deserve to feel safe in their own buildings, residences, and places of business.

We urge, respectfully, that this Committee and the City Council as a whole reject these two proposals, and instead work with stakeholders on targeted regulations that protect privacy without leaving New Yorkers defenseless.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that you and your colleagues might have.

Thank you.

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