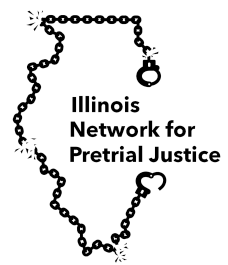


October 14, 2026



The Honorable [REDACTED]
Cook County Commissioner [REDACTED]
118 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Opposing the Procurement of BriefCam in Cook County Jail

Dear Commissioner [REDACTED]

The Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice writes to you, along with the 84 undersigned community, faith, legal, health, policy, and advocacy organizations, to continue to reject attempts by the Cook County Sheriff's Office to procure BriefCam AI surveillance technology for use inside Cook County Jail.

After [concerns about potential civil and privacy rights violations and racial discrimination were raised by community organizations, civil liberties advocates, and directly impacted people](#), this proposal was pulled from the Technology Committee's May meeting agenda. We remain deeply concerned, however, that the Sheriff's Office is continuing to pursue BriefCam without the transparency, public scrutiny, or independent review that a proposal of this magnitude requires.

The dramatic increase in people dying while incarcerated in Cook County Jail in recent years shows that there are real health and safety issues behind the walls of the jail. In 2023, the jail experienced its highest mortality rate on record, with more people dying while in the Sheriff's custody than during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2025, nine people incarcerated in Cook County Jail lost their lives and [Sheriff's Officers are being investigated for criminal behavior in relation to one of these deaths](#). These deaths have been connected to people not receiving timely medical care, guards not being present during physical altercations due to "cross-watching", suicide, homicide, alleged neglect, and violence by sheriff's deputies. These are not problems that can be solved by layering artificial intelligence onto existing jail cameras.

Before the County considers any technology that claims to improve safety in the jail, the Board must first review the human rights crisis at Cook County Jail, the Sheriff's management of the facility, and the conditions that have contributed to preventable deaths and serious harm. Such a holistic, transparent review is urgent in light of the fact that [a Cook County Sheriff's Officer has been charged with bringing lethal drugs into the jail and others have been investigated for homicide in connection with the death of Martinez Duncan](#).

Briefcam has already been [banned by the French Supreme Court](#) due to privacy concerns and false positives that led to civil rights abuses. To our knowledge, BriefCam has never been used in a jail or prison. Attached to this letter you will find a [fact sheet](#) detailing a host of civil rights and privacy issues associated with this technology.

There is also a real risk that this technology could lead to violations of Illinois law, which mandates that people in custody be under human observation by personal visual inspection at least once every 30 minutes. [A recent audit revealed that Cook County was not in compliance with cell check standards nearly 20% of the time](#). Instead of using BriefCam to dangerously

replace human observation, the Sheriff should reassign officers who are currently [duplicating efforts of other law enforcement agencies](#) or [Cook County Health](#) to serve his office's core function: overseeing the jail.

There are also serious transparency and procurement concerns with the proposed BriefCam contract, which was not subject to the County's standard public notice and competitive bidding requirements. The public has not had access to the terms of the proposed agreement. Even you as a Commissioner who is being asked to approve this contract have not been given a clear public explanation for how BriefCam will be used, the purpose it will serve, the breadth of the surveillance data collected, used, and analyzed, including whether privacy invasive face recognition will be used, how biometric data would be stored, who would have access, and how long and where data would be retained. Nor has Sheriff Dart provided any information on what, if any, safeguards will be employed to protect against errors from an unreliable and privacy invasive technology, including establishing independent oversight and mechanisms to ensure accountability governing the use of the system. AI technology is changing rapidly. Tech companies are regularly introducing new uses for emerging technologies, many of which are free of oversight, have not been independently tested, and create new privacy concerns. It is impossible to predict all of the guardrails that may be needed to ensure this technology doesn't lead to civil rights and privacy violations.

Cook County is currently facing a \$550 million budget shortfall. Money that goes toward purchasing dubious surveillance technology is money that could instead go toward filling dire gaps in essential human services that contribute to safer communities. As this technology develops further, there are likely to be increased costs over time, including software updates, staff training, expanded camera capacity, new hardware, maintenance, and future add-ons. This technology could also lead to lawsuits for civil rights violations occurring in the wake of false alerts from BriefCam, leading to even more strain on the County budget.

We again call on you and your fellow Commissioners to reject the proposed purchase of BriefCam for use inside the jail. Instead, we ask that the Board follow up on the 2024 hearing on deaths in Cook County Jail and conduct an independent review of the Sheriff's management of the jail. The County should explore effective, evidence-based mechanisms to protect the health and safety of people in the Sheriff's custody that do not risk civil rights and privacy violations, do not waste taxpayer dollars, and do not expose people detained in the jail to new forms of harm.

Cook County does not need an AI surveillance experiment inside the jail. It needs accountability, transparency, timely medical care, required human observation, and real investment in the non-law enforcement services and supports that keep people alive and make communities safer.

Sincerely,

The Cook County members of the Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice and supporting organizations:

33rd Ward Working Families
48th Ward Neighbors for Justice
ACLU of Illinois
Access Living
A Just Harvest
A New PATH
AIDS Foundation Chicago
Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights
and Empowerment
AFSC
Asian Americans for Advancing Justice:
Chicago
Believer's Bail Out
Better Government Association
Beyond Legal Aid
BlackRoots Alliance
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Build Arena
Cabrini Green Legal Aid
Cannabis Equity IL Coalition
Chicago Alliance Against Racist and
Political Repression
Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts
Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
(DSA)
Chicago Council of Lawyers
Chicago for Abortion Rights
Chicago Freedom School
Chicago Jobs with Justice
The Chicago Recovery Alliance
Chicago Torture Justice Center
Chicago United Families' Coalition
Chicago United Solidarity Project (CUSP)
Children's Best Interest Project
Chicago Votes
Circles and Ciphers
Community Justice and Civil Rights Clinic,
Northwestern Law School
Clergy for a New Drug Policy
Community Renewal Society

Electronic Frontier Foundation
Equity and Transformation
First Defense Legal Aid
Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice
Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative
IL Harm Reduction & Recovery Coalition
IL-NOW (National Organization for
Women)
Illinois Prison Project
Illinois Social Justice Alliance
Impact For Equity
Indivisible Chicago-South Side
Jail Solidarity Network
Japanese American Citizens League
Chicago Chapter
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA)
Justice and Witness Ministry of Chicago
Metropolitan Association – Illinois
Conference United Church of Christ
Liberation Library
Live Free Illinois
Lucy Parsons Labs
Mamas Activating Movements for Abolition
& Solidarity
Mano a Mano Family Resource Center
Muslim Civic Coalition
National Lawyers Guild Chicago
National Organization for Women: Illinois
Nehemiah Trinity Rising
Nikkei Uprising
No New Prisons IL
Parole Illinois
The People's 32nd
The People's Lobby
People's Law Office
Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education
Project
Pretrial Justice Institute
Prison Policy Initiative
The PR Project

Restore Justice
Robin Potter & Associates, PC
Sana Healing Collective
She Votes Illinois
SisterReach, Inc
Stick Talk
Ujimaa Medics
Southernsiders Organized for Unity and
Liberation
Students for Sensible Drug Policy – IL

Treatment Alternatives for Stronger
Communities (TASC)
United Northwest Side
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of
Illinois
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of
Illinois
West Town Law Office
Worker's Center for Racial Justice