

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

### Ranking Member Shontel Brown

#### Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation

#### “Breach of Trust: Surveillance in Private Spaces”

#### May 20, 2025

Thank you, Chairwoman Mace, for calling a hearing on this topic. I think it is fair to say that we both agree that everyone has the right to be safe from prying eyes, electronic or real, in private places.

When someone checks into a hotel or a short-term rental, they have a reasonable expectation that they will not be watched or recorded. It shocks me that we even need to have this conversation, but this is the world we live in.

**What’s more, new technology has only made it easier for bad actors to abuse our trust. Cameras are smaller, cheaper, and harder to spot than ever. Although the largest companies in the industry have explicitly prohibited surveillance cameras inside of properties, too many bad actors have continuously been noncompliant.**

A CNN report found that Airbnb may have received as many as 35,000 complaints about cameras inside of rentals on their platform. This isn’t just invasive, it’s traumatizing.

Having hidden cameras in private spaces is not about security. It is not about making sure guests do not throw outrageous parties on the property. Outside security cameras would accomplish that.

**No — this is about invading someone’s personal privacy. The lack of clear national standards allows platforms and hosts to operate under a patchwork of inconsistent rules, leaving consumers vulnerable.**

Women are often the primary targets of harassment and surveillance. And the ways technology can be employed to harass and surveil women extend beyond hidden cameras in hotel rooms. For example, the National Organization for Women recently released a report finding that a quarter of American women have experienced abuse online, including sexual harassment, cyberstalking, and other threats.

Women of color reported experiencing the highest rates of online abuse. However, all communities are not impacted by surveillance in the same way. Black and Brown communities are disproportionately surveilled by law enforcement using surveillance cameras.

These systems frequently leverage facial recognition technology, which has shown significant error rates when analyzing individuals with Black and Brown skin tones. One study found that the

error rate for facial recognition technology when used on light-skinned men was less than one in one hundred, while the error rate when used for darker skinned women was nearly 35%.

**This discrepancy raises serious questions about the possibility that surveillance technology will be used to unfairly target minority communities. Cameras that misidentify people do not create law and order, they only put more people at risk.**

I appreciate the opportunity this hearing brings to discuss the ways that surveillance technology can be used to target women and other minority communities.

I ask my Republican colleagues to join me in thinking about the ways that this technology should be regulated to stop its misuse. As lawmakers, we cannot stand by while surveillance technology evolves unchecked.

**With the rise of AI-driven monitoring tools, we must act decisively to close loopholes that allow consumer-facing platforms to profit at the expense of personal privacy.**

**Let me be clear: every American has a fundamental right to privacy—especially in personal spaces like bedrooms, bathrooms, and living areas. Renting a home, whether for a weekend or a month, or walking down the street in your neighborhood should never require sacrificing that right.**

Thank you, Chairwoman Mace, for raising these concerns about surveillance technology and women's safety and privacy. I look forward to today's conversation. Thank you and I yield back.

###

---

Contact: Alexandra Bell, Communications Director (202) 226-5181