



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7
2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
PHONE 510-981-7170, FAX 510-981-7177,
EMAIL kworthington@cityofberkeley.info

CONSENT CALENDAR

November 27th, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
Subject: Refer to the City Manager to consider boycotting Amazon for its role in tracking immigrants in cooperation with ICE and abusive working conditions **and its labor practices toward its employees.**

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to consider the City of Berkeley boycotting Amazon and refrain from using its services to purchase goods for city use.

BACKGROUND

This referral is requested to be considered along to be with the Sanctuary Contracting Ordinance and the Resolution declaring City of Berkeley will not contract with or invest City funds in any entity involved in the production or upgrading of weapons.

A recent report released by several Latin and immigration nonprofits including Mijente, The National Immigration Project, Immigrant Defense Project, and Empower LLC has implicated the tech giant Amazon in playing a central role in the Trump administration's effort to track and detain immigrants. Amazon has done this by providing federal agencies such as ICE and DHS use of its cloud storage to host data collected by Palantir, another company named in the report which designed the Investigative Case Management system crucial to ICE's operations by using a vast ecosystem that combines public and private data making it easier to track immigrants and deport them. Little information is known about the inner workings of this software or how ICE uses it but after its implementation arrests increased 42% compared to the previous year. While it is not the only company to store and manage data for ICE's use according to the report Amazon has the most federal authorizations for government data out of them all.

By profiting off the Trump Administration's campaign against immigrants by allowing ICE to use its services, Amazon is picking a side whether it wants to admit it or not. While Page 1 of 2 Palantir is exclusively a software business, Amazon still relies on much of its profits being generated by sales of physical merchandise and originally made a name for itself as the convenient one stop market place for everything.

Moreover, Amazon has come under fire recently for its labor practices which involve using surveillance technology to monitor its warehouse employees and punishes them if they do not meet their targets in time. On top of this, Amazon has tried to prevent its workers from unionizing. Recently, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders have sent a letter to CEO Jeff Bezos asking him to look into allegations of his company deliberately distributing anti-union materials.

Therefore, the City of Berkeley should consider that it will boycott Amazon and not use its services to purchase goods either for city use or for official events and commit to finding ethical alternatives. Setting this example will hopefully encourage other cities to follow suit sending a message to Amazon to prioritize human lives over money.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minimal

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

No negative impact and consistent with city standards.

MORE INFORMATION

1. <https://mijente.net/2018/10/23/whos-behind-ice-the-tech-companies-fueling-deportations/>
2. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ny-news-amazon-tech-companies-transforming-immigration-enforcement-20181023-story.html?fbclid=IwAR3Pk9XQWZviN-5gNm-bYIpaVZrX5J9zvoLjsoV7KYaB8AGOg6YF2z52Hck>
3. <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/612335/amazon-is-the-invisible-backbone-behind-ices-immigration-crackdown/>
4. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/10/17/bernie-sanders-elizabeth-warren-target-amazon-over-labor-practices/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.546918a7150f
5. <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2017/12/7-examples-how-amazon-treats-their-90000-warehouse.html>
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/08/amazon-jeff-bezos-unionize-working-conditions>

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington
Raja Sutherland

510-981-717
rsutherl89@gmail.com