

SUBMITTED TESTIMONY OF THE QUEENS & BRONX BUILDING ASSOCIATION
October 18, 2019

I am Robert Altman, and I am the legislative consultant of the Queens & Bronx Building Association. I submit this testimony regarding Intro. Nos. 1170-2018, 1672-2019 and 1758-2019, all of the bills relating biometric scanning in residential dwellings and keys. All of the items were laid over by the Committee on Housing & Buildings at its October 7, 2019 hearing.

Generally, we believe the Council should tread very carefully here. While we understand that in the era of Facebook and analytics and concerns about privacy that this is a legitimate issue for the Council to look into, we also don't believe that blanket legislation should be promulgated without more extensive study. By eliminating this material as an option, the Council closes out a number of potential benefits of biometric information. These can include things such as crime reduction and allowing landlords, condos and coops to determine if a unit is being used in their buildings for short-stay use that may contravene future laws seeking to prevent certain uses of Air BNB for example.

The one bill we definitively oppose is the Intro. No. 1758, where a mechanical key is required. Not within this definition is a key fob. Fobs do not lead to accumulation of biometric information. While some are concerned about tracking, the fact is most apartments are intended to be primary residences, so tracking is a legitimate purpose. Moreover, no biometric information is accumulated. Thus, we do not understand the concern about key fobs, a common use, and oppose this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.