

April 27, 2026

Berkeley City Council  
Civic Center Building  
2180 Milvia Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

RE: Public Safety Technology (Flock Safety contract)

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Because Flock Safety uses overseas sweatshop labor, the City of Berkeley Commission on Labor urges the Council to pause its use of Flock equipment and software and to halt any further expansion of the program.

### **Sweatshop-Free Procurement Ordinance**

In 2009, the Berkeley City Council passed Ordinance 7,099-N.S. also known as the “Sweatshop-Free Procurement Ordinance” ([Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 13.97](#)). While the Sweatshop-free Procurement Ordinance is specific to the City of Berkeley’s procurement of apparel, the wording of the ordinance is an expression of the Berkeley’s fundamental values as a municipality:

B. The City of Berkeley recognizes a public interest in avoiding payments to vendors who maintain sweatshop working conditions, including below-subsistence wages, excessively long working hours, unhealthy and unsafe working environments, child, indentured, and prison labor, disregard for local and international labor laws and workplace regulations, disregard for fundamental women’s rights, and repression of workers’ rights to assemble and bargain collectively. (emphasis by Labor Commission)

### **Flock Safety uses contract labor in the Philippines**

As it deliberates on the renewal and expansion of its contract, the City Council must consider the fact that Flock Safety outsources much of its work to low-paid gig workers in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, Flock contracts with firms in the Philippines to do data annotations, often referred to as “crowdwork” in which workers view thousands of hours of video annotating the data to differentiate between a tree, for example, and a person, to help train the AI algorithms used by surveillance technology. This is low-wage, monotonous yet high-pressure work and the workers doing this analysis, as documented by labor rights organizers “are exposed to substandard labor

---

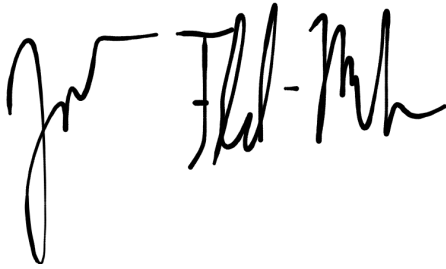
<sup>1</sup> Maya Perez, “Flock Safety Outsources AI Training to Low-Paid Philippine Workers, Sparking Privacy Concerns,” *WebProNews*, December 8, 2025, <https://www.webpronews.com/flock-safety-outsources-ai-training-to-low-paid-philippine-workers-sparking-privacy-concerns/>.

conditions, including extremely low rates of pay and a lack of labor rights and protections.”<sup>2</sup> To outsource much of its data analysis to low-paid workers in the Global South, companies like Flock Safety can maximize their own profits by evading US minimum wage and working condition protections.<sup>3 4</sup>

### **Berkeley must not support companies that exploit overseas workers**

This circumvention of US and local labor standards goes against the City’s commitment to workers’ rights. Berkeley taxpayers funds must not be used to support digital sweatshops. The Commission on Labor urges the City to suspend its contract with Flock Safety and any other companies that use unregulated contract labor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joey Flegel-Mishlove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joey" written in a large, stylized font, followed by "Flegel-Mishlove" in a smaller, more compact script.

Joey Flegel-Mishlove, Chair  
City of Berkeley Commission on Labor

---

<sup>2</sup> Jimbo Gulle, “PH ‘Digital Sweatshops’ Stress Ethical Concerns, Worker Rights Violations,” *Manila Standard*, September 1, 2023, <https://manilastandard.net/?p=314366458>.

<sup>3</sup> “Behind the AI Boom, the Armies of Overseas Workers in ‘Digital Sweatshops,’” *Independent Premium*, *The Independent*, August 30, 2023, <https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/long-reads/behind-the-ai-boom-an-army-of-overseas-workers-in-digital-sweatshops-b2401142.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Salvador Santino F. Regilme, “Artificial Intelligence Colonialism: Environmental Damage, Labor Exploitation, and Human Rights Crises in the Global South,” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 44, no. 2 (2024): 75–92, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2024.a950958>.