On May 18th, the city of San Francisco passed a unique set of laws. They became the first city in the US to ban local police from using facial recognition to identify and convict people. The use of facial recognition has increased over the past ten years, concerning privacy organizations that claim that the technology violates a citizen’s right to privacy. Anymore, more organizations form that are concerned about the government overstepping its boundaries in surveillance. The government wants to protect its people- the US’s extraordinarily large defense budget is spent to ensure the safety of Americans. It is well known that for more safety measures to be put in place, the people must be willing to give up some of their own personal privacy. Yet, where should the line be drawn between privacy and safety? When do the “protective measures” the government puts in place harm more than help citizens?

On one hand, by putting together systems such as facial recognition, tapping citizen’s phones, and installing secret cameras in people’s homes, harmful people are located much easier. Possible terrorist plots and confessions to murders could be overheard. However, Americans by birth have the right to privacy, and these systems corrupt the foundation of the 14th amendment. If the government were to allow security to always protect privacy, it is possible that people could use this excuse to strip Americans of other rights. Trying to figure out which privacy systems people are willing to accept and which ones they see as a violation of their rights is nearly impossible because there is no clear answer, only a thousand differing opinions.
The topic of privacy and the government is brought up all throughout *The Hunger Games*. Through the use of video cameras, audio recorders, and other surveillance, the government constantly watches Panem's citizens in each district. In this way, any thoughts of rebellion are stopped before they are enacted upon. Today in several major cities, there are a great number of surveillance cameras in place. Ultimately, these cameras are said to be used for crime prevention, public safety, and to maintain order. In a similar way, the Capitol conducts their surveillance for the exact same reasons, but does so in a way that limits the freedom of their people to speak openly and freely about their concerns regarding the government. If an action is deemed to be in opposition to the government’s rules there can be punishment for the individual as well as any others in association.

The idea of surveillance continues from the districts to directly into the actual Hunger Games arena. First a GPS tracker is implanted into the fighters via a needle under the skin. While in the arena, tributes are watched by hidden cameras and every move made is transmitted to the government, corporate sponsors, and the general public. The surveillance puts extreme pressure on Katniss, who must balance following the rules of the arena to prevent the gamemakers from killing her and showing hostility towards the games’ treatment of children for her family/other districts. The very act of the government strictly watching the tributes, the same type of surveillance meant to keep people safe, is ironic in the fact that they are making sure the tributes fight to the death. The games themselves are a way for the government to control their people by fear.

Understanding how the government in *The Hunger Games* ended up setting up a system bestowing them too much power over their people made me reconsider my stance on government
surveillance. I lean more on the side of giving up my privacy to ensure my safety, but I now realize how quickly this mentality could strip away my rights. In the situation that the government were to become corrupted, such as what happened in *The Hunger Games*, having eyes constantly on the people prevents them from speaking out about anything they disagree with. While our government is currently far away from becoming the dictatorship of Panem, it's still a wise idea to reconsider spying on people for “the common good”.