

February 20, 2026

STATEMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Rick Allen, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions
Committee on Education and Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

Re: Subcommittee Hearing on “Building an AI-Ready America: Adopting AI at Work”

Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and members of the Subcommittee:

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation presents significant opportunities—as well as important challenges—for employers and workers. Across industries, employees are already using AI-enabled tools to increase productivity, streamline routine tasks, and support better work-life integration. AI can also help individuals identify roles that better align with their skills and interests. By automating repetitive or administrative work, these tools free employees to focus on higher-value, strategic, and more fulfilling responsibilities. At the same time, AI is expanding access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities, advancing workplace inclusion and accessibility.

When deployed thoughtfully and responsibly, AI can enhance workplace safety, improve hiring and retention outcomes, broaden access to opportunity, and strengthen compliance with existing labor and employment laws. However, without strong governance and oversight, AI systems may pose risks related to data privacy, transparency, bias, and employee trust.

The [CHRO Association](#) is a public policy advocacy organization that represents the most senior human resource officers (CHROs) in nearly 400 of the largest corporations across industries doing business in the United States and globally. Collectively, these companies employ more than 10 million employees in the United States, nearly nine percent of the private sector workforce, and 20 million employees worldwide.

Association members are committed to deploying workplace technologies in a transparent, nondiscriminatory, and legally compliant manner. To support this effort, the Association launched its [Center on Workplace AI](#), designed to help members responsibly integrate AI in

ways that drive business performance, enhance the employee experience, and strengthen workforce governance.

Below are examples of how Association member companies—while complying with existing laws and remaining attentive to employee concerns—are thoughtfully implementing AI across their organizations.

The Business Case for Responsible AI Use

Employers are already strongly incentivized to use AI carefully and appropriately:

- A poor hiring decision can cost a company up to **five times an employee's annual salary**, according to research by Accenture.
- Reputational harm from biased or harmful employment practices can significantly undermine workforce recruitment and retention, increasing per-hire costs by as much as **10 percent**.
- Erosion of employee trust can hinder an organization's ability to adopt new technologies, undermine its competitive position, and damage its brand—ultimately weakening its standing as an employer of choice.

Although the technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, AI does not alter employers' existing legal or ethical responsibilities under labor, employment, and anti-discrimination laws. If anything, it heightens the importance of robust governance, thoughtful oversight, and clear accountability.

Key Areas Where Automation Supports Employers and Workers

1. Ensuring Safe Workplaces

Automation and AI-powered monitoring tools can enhance safety for employees, customers, and the public by:

- Preventing unauthorized access to secure facilities
- Monitoring hazardous environments
- Supporting safer driving behaviors in transportation and logistics
- Detecting suspicious or unsafe activity in real time

In healthcare and other regulated industries, automated systems are essential for tracking controlled substances, ensuring proper dosages, and preventing diversion—protecting both workers and the public.

2. Measuring Productivity in Modern Work Environments

As work becomes increasingly digital, hybrid, and remote, employers must be able to assess performance and workflow responsibly.

Association member companies report that:

- Automated tools are not used for constant or continuous surveillance
- Data is typically reviewed periodically for performance assessment and coaching
- Automated insights supplement, rather than replace, human judgment
- Employees are provided advance notice when monitoring tools are used

3. Expanding Opportunity and Reducing Bias

When properly designed and governed, AI can help employers:

- Expand talent pools by identifying qualified candidates who may otherwise be overlooked
- Analyze workforce demographics across race, gender, age, disability, veteran status, and other characteristics
- Identify disparities and inform targeted inclusion strategies
- Improve employee feedback mechanisms, retention, and professional development

Used appropriately, AI can reduce—not exacerbate—bias in hiring and employment decisions by standardizing processes and surfacing patterns that may not be visible through traditional methods.

Importantly, in human resource functions, AI is most effective when it **augments—not replaces—human judgment**. Recruiters and hiring managers remain accountable for employment decisions, with AI serving as a decision-support tool rather than an automated gatekeeper.

4. Risk Mitigation and Legal Compliance

Employers operate under extensive federal and state requirements related to:

- Workplace safety
- Anti-discrimination
- Wage and hour compliance
- Data protection and recordkeeping

Automated systems enable organizations to process and analyze large volumes of data with greater accuracy and efficiency, helping to reduce human error and strengthen compliance. As

scholars have observed, modern regulatory obligations often cannot be met at scale without sophisticated data collection, analytics, and monitoring capabilities.

Looking Ahead

Before advancing consequential regulations governing AI in the workplace, policymakers should engage directly with employers and other stakeholders to ensure that policy decisions reflect both the current and evolving capabilities of AI systems, as well as real-world workplace practices. At present, there is insufficient empirical data to fully assess AI's impact on jobs, wages, and workforce dynamics.

A balanced, risk-based approach will allow the United States to advance trustworthy AI while preserving innovation, competitiveness, and worker protections.

Furthermore, as policymakers consider potential regulation of AI in the workplace, we caution that overly prescriptive, AI-specific mandates could yield unintended consequences—stifling innovation, increasing legal uncertainty, and further fragmenting the regulatory landscape. Rather than adding new layers to an already complex framework, policymakers should prioritize clarifying how existing labor and employment laws apply to AI and promote voluntary compliance through practical, best-practice guidance.

At the same time, Congress should address the expanding patchwork of state and local AI laws, many of which impose overlapping or conflicting requirements. This fragmented environment creates significant compliance burdens for employers and uncertainty for employees, potentially undermining workplace stability and blurring lines of accountability.

To reduce these risks, Congress should consider establishing clear national principles or guardrails that streamline compliance and expressly preempt inconsistent state and local regimes. Given the complexity, fluidity, and nationwide scope of AI deployment, Congress is uniquely positioned to balance competing interests and craft a coherent, durable framework through a comprehensive legislative process.

In the absence of federal action, organizations—while continuing to comply with existing laws—are prudently advancing their own AI governance structures rather than waiting for regulation to catch up with innovation. To date, many private-sector initiatives have adopted measured, responsible approaches to AI development and deployment in the workplace.

Principles for Policymakers Considering Workplace AI Legislation and Regulation

As Congress and the Administration consider legislative or regulatory proposals addressing AI in the workplace, the CHRO Association encourages policymakers to reflect on the following

principles—many of which our member companies are already actively implementing across their organizations:

Privacy and Security

- AI and data-use policies should explicitly address employee privacy
- Data should only be used for purposes compatible with its original collection, absent employee consent
- Policies should align with existing domestic and international privacy frameworks

Transparency

- Employers should be able to explain how AI systems are used and how they inform decision-making
- Employees should have clear avenues to raise concerns and seek resolution
- Transparency requirements should be practical and scalable

Integrity

- AI should be designed to **augment human decision-making**, not replace it
- Use of technology should align with organizational values and cultural norms
- Employers should clearly articulate positive intent in AI deployment

Bias Mitigation

- AI systems and training data should be continuously evaluated for unintended bias
- Employers should commit to monitoring, testing, and correcting disparities
- Policymakers should recognize that AI can be part of the solution to bias when properly governed

Accountability and Governance

- Employers should remain accountable for foreseeable harms arising from AI use
- Ethics training should be integrated across the AI lifecycle—from development to deployment
- Governance frameworks should ensure responsible design, oversight, and ongoing evaluation as the technologies are continuously evolving

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments for the congressional record regarding how the United States can build an AI-ready workforce and workplace. I appreciate your leadership on this critical issue, which will shape the future of work, worker protections, and

American competitiveness for years to come. Thoughtful, evidence-based policymaking—grounded in engagement with employers, workers, and technologists—can help ensure that AI expands opportunity, strengthens safety and fairness, and preserves U.S. innovation and global leadership.

The CHRO Association and its members stand ready to serve as a resource to Congress as it considers the future of AI in the workplace. If helpful, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further, arrange a Hill briefing, or facilitate direct engagement with Association members. Please feel free to contact me at Cbirbal@chro.org.

Sincerely,



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CC: Members of the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions