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Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
Energy and Commerce Committee Hearing
“Leveraging Agency Expertise to Foster American AI
Leadership and Innovation”
December 13, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, everyone.

To win the future, America—not China—must remain the global leader in artificial intelligence.

The reality is, there is no better place in the world than here to ensure this technology is used responsibly...

...to raise our standard of living, protect data privacy, and create more opportunities for the hardworking people of this country.

CEMENTING AMERICAN AI LEADERSHIP

This Committee has been leading on policies to promote innovation in AI for everything from our supply chains, energy, health care, emerging technologies, and more.

Today’s hearing is the culmination of those efforts.

It’s clear that AI will have a significant impact on every aspect of the economy, as well as how the federal government engages with stakeholders and oversees industries.

It’s also clear that unilateral, one-size-fits-all regulations do a poor job addressing varying use cases.... and may ultimately hamper innovation.

LEVERAGING SECTOR-SPECIFIC EXPERTISE

To foster American leadership, we need a complete understanding of how each agency can apply its unique, sector-specific expertise...

...and ensure agencies are equipped to foster—not hamper—innovation and address the disruptive impact of AI across the entire economy.

AI can help doctors better detect diseases and develop new drugs and treatments.

It can help better deliver affordable, reliable energy to Americans....

... and improve broadband services and cybersecurity.

Across the board, federal agencies must understand and be equipped to address the unique benefits and risks associated with these new technologies...

... and know when, or whether, it's appropriate to take action to address them.

What we are seeing around the world is a call for American leadership.

China is abusing emerging technologies and data to suppress and control its own citizens with mass surveillance.

Europe is overregulating and halting innovation in its tracks.

We can chart a new and better course to improve people's lives—of leveraging AI and upholding our values for human rights, individual liberty, the free market and limited government.

That means the administration and Congress must work together.

DATA PRIVACY

We should start with one key action ...

...and that's to lay the groundwork to protect people's information with a national data privacy standard.

It's time that we provide people with greater transparency and put them back in control over the collection and use of their personal information.

We also need to strengthen data security protections to safeguard people's information against threats.

The theft and exploitation of sensitive information, especially biometric data, poses significant risks.

Establishing foundational protections early will ensure greater public trust in AI, which will help ensure future innovations are made in the U.S.

AI EXECUTIVE ORDER

In October, the Biden administration released a sweeping Executive Order on the development and use of AI along with a proposed OMB Memo on how agencies should manage their own use of AI.

That includes the Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, and Energy.

I have concerns that some aspects of the Executive Order start us down the path of the European Union, where they have over regulated technological innovation out of existence.

We cannot let over-bearing regulations hinder American AI advancements, and in turn limit U.S. global competitiveness.

Your agencies have a lot of work ahead, and today we hope to hear more about how you plan to carry out these responsibilities and coordinate with public and private partners, as well as Congress.

CONCLUSION

These technologies, and the risks they pose, will continue to evolve, and agencies must be prepared to adapt and remain vigilant.

As we explore the best path forward, I'm hopeful that the administration will work with Congress to address the risks and take full advantage of the benefits of AI, and not just act unilaterally through executive fiat.

I am optimistic about the promise of AI and believe that this Committee can lead the way in supporting AI innovation in the public and private sectors.

It's crucial that we strike the right balance with AI, one that gives businesses the flexibility to remain agile as they develop these cutting-edge technologies...

...while also ensuring the responsible use of this new technology.

I look forward to discussing how we can achieve that balance and yield back.