

**Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**

**Opening Statement
of
Rep. Robin Kelly**

Inclusion in Tech: How Diversity Benefits All Americans

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Member Rodgers for holding this hearing today. As a founder of the Tech Accountability Caucus and founder of the Diversifying Tech Caucus with my friend on the other side of the aisle, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, I am glad that this Subcommittee is committed to addressing the issue of diversity in tech.

Report after report from technology companies continue to show a lack of diversity in their workforces. According to the National Urban League, less than 5% of the digital workforce is African American today. It is not just the large tech companies in Silicon Valley. Organizations like Mentoring Youth Through Technology or MYTT in my District, help get minority students interested in STEM careers. But I continue to hear from start-ups in Chicago that they struggle to recruit diverse workforces. There is a fundamental problem getting women and minorities into the technology jobs and it must be corrected.

A lack of diversity creates real world problems of producing programs that can harm underserved communities. Poorly trained artificial intelligence tools can lead to implicit racial, gender, or ideological biases and can perpetuate existing biases. As AI use becomes more common and decisions are made by machines we may not understand, it is vital that these considerations are taken into account.

I am hopeful that companies are going to see the benefits of having a diverse workforce that brings new ideas and perspectives. While there is no one solution to this problem, I hope that the witnesses today will share their experiences and make recommendations so we can continue to make tech a more diverse and inclusive community.

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