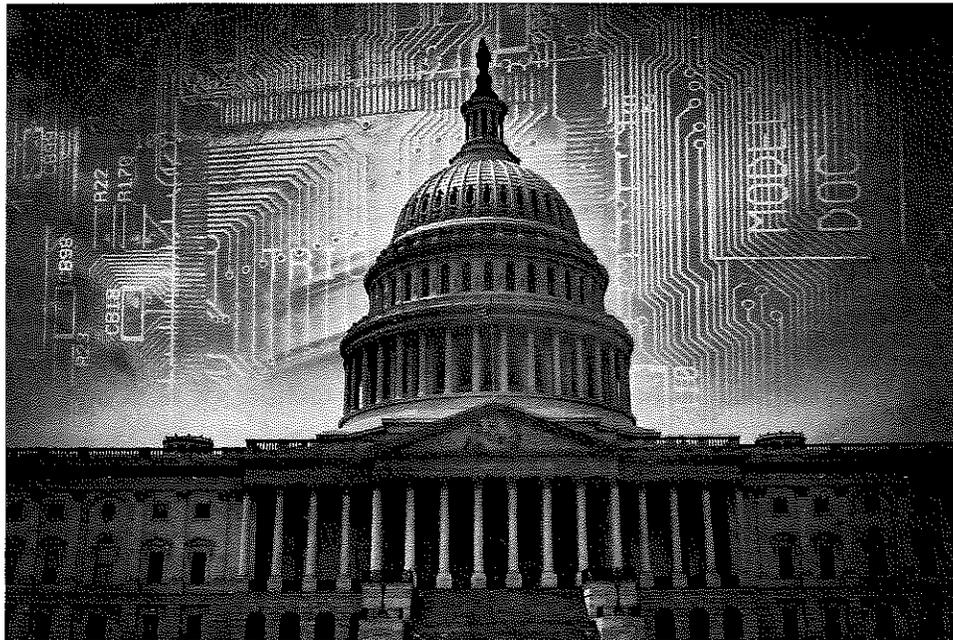


OPINION > COMMENTARY • Opinion

Trump is crushing America's AI leadership. We still have time to fix it.



(Photo by iStockphoto via Getty Images)



By **LOU CORREA** | Orange County Register

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Earlier this month, a House Judiciary Subcommittee held a hearing to delve into innovation and competition in the AI sector. While Subcommittee Members agreed on a need for guardrails with AI, disagreement over the real threats to and from America's AI sector, including how much and what kind of regulation is appropriate to allow the industry to grow remain.

At the hearing, I made clear that the greatest threats to America's AI industry come from this Administration's policies.

Cutting funding of scientific research at universities and federal agencies, arbitrary and hostile immigration policies, and misguided tariffs, are imperiling America's world leadership in AI, as well as in life sciences, technology, and manufacturing among many other sectors. We have always prospered from our innovative and industrious nature that shines most brightly at our universities.

Groundbreaking research at American institutions has led to the development of many of the products and services that have fundamentally shaped our nation and the world, including AI, the MRI scanner, numerous vaccines and antibiotics, rocket fuel, e-readers, insulin, Plexiglass, the heart-Lung machine, Google, LCD technology, GPS, and robotics. These advances have enabled us to live more efficient, secure, and longer lives.

Universities are where the next generation of American entrepreneurs and innovators learn, explore, and develop. They serve as the pipeline for the next generation of ideas and for training our home-grown highly skilled employees that our country needs to flourish.

Moreover, our universities have traditionally attracted the brightest minds from around the world, but that draw is in jeopardy as this Administration decimates scientific funding. As we slash our research funding at universities and federal agencies, China and other countries are ramping up their R&D investments. The top scientists, engineers, and medical researchers in America have called out the heavy price of these cuts.

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Immigrants help drive our economy and make America a more prosperous nation. Immigrants and their children found almost half of the Fortune 500 companies as of 2024. Of America's billion-dollar startup companies, over 50 percent had an immigrant founder or co-founder. These numbers are even more telling in AI, where almost 65 percent of the leading AI companies have an immigrant founder. We want immigrants to come to America and prosper.

The current administration's immigration policies are shouting, "Don't come. We don't want you." Revoking visas and green cards and trying to end birthright citizenship will discourage highly skilled immigrants from coming to study and stay in the U.S., denying our nation of innovative individuals and new companies. Instead, we are scaring these immigrants into staying in their home countries or locating in more welcoming nations. Instead, we need to embrace these immigrants so they can continue to contribute and shape our country for the better.

Tariffs, like taxes, should be well targeted to specific goals. Putting tariffs on allied countries like Australia, that we have surplus with, makes little sense. This Administration's "shotgun" approach to tariffs, is causing upheaval, uncertainty, and threatening American leadership. The more uncertainty, the less companies invest in R&D, leading to fewer innovations. It's a downward vicious cycle for American innovation.

Many of the industries that drive our economy by creating new inventions and employing millions of highly skilled workers rely on both exporting their goods and importing resources, equipment, and parts from abroad. The tariffs that this Administration enacted threaten to destroy supply chains, drive up costs, and stagnate growth, potentially leading to high unemployment, businesses closing, high inflation, and a loss of confidence in the world's leading economy. Tariffs must be targeted and balanced, with the goal of promoting the well-being of American taxpayers, as opposed to causing an economic slowdown.

The self-harm from the trifecta of research cuts, misconceived immigration policies, and unrelenting tariffs threatens to undo what Americans have built up over decades. Today, our nation continues to be the world leader in innovation, AI, hi-tech, biotech, energy production, manufacturing, and agriculture. We still lead international trade and commerce. English is the "Lingua Franca" of the world. We are the world's financial center. And the dollar is the world's currency. We are at risk of losing it all.

I will not stand by quietly while this great nation that I love, and all of us have worked so hard to build and maintain, gets torn down from the inside. We must reverse this destructive course by supporting research at universities and federal agencies, keeping the inventions and pipeline strong, embracing hard-working immigrants, and focusing on a common-sense tariff policy. We are still the envy of the world. We are still the world's gold standard. Let's do what we do best, lead the rest of the world.

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