COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Jim Baird, PhD

Research & Technology Subcommittee Hearing

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work

September 24, 2019

Chairwoman Stevens, thank you for holding today's hearing on "Artificial intelligence (AI) and the Future of Work."

Since the term AI was first coined in the 1950s, we have made huge advances in the field. And thanks to critical investments by government, industry, and universities, the United States is leading in global AI Research & Development.

Today, AI systems have been deployed in every sector of the U.S. economy. These technologies have already delivered significant benefits for U.S. economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and national security.

AI has long been a subject of interest for the House Science Committee and we have held several important and productive hearings on this topic.

In the past, we have discussed how to define AI, the science of AI technologies, and the needs for standards to address ethics and potential bias.

Now, this afternoon, we will examine AI from the perspective of the American worker.

In order to remain a leader in AI, I believe we must prepare our workforce for next generation opportunities in this technology and for a future defined by lifelong learning.

In order to grow our economy, I also believe we must acknowledge and understand how AI is changing and will continue to change the jobs and lives of hard-working Americans.

This is a large-scale effort that is going to require cooperation between industry, academia and federal agencies.

So I am pleased to see that The Trump Administration is making this issue a priority and recently established the National Council for the American Worker and the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board.

American industry has responded well to the Administration's initiatives. Over 300 companies and organizations have pledged to study and expand education, training, and reskilling opportunities for American workers to gain AI-relevant skills.

We also need to rethink how we educate future workers and reskill the works of today, all the way from K-12 schools to community colleges and vocational schools, to 4-year universities.

Some leaders in the U.S. education system are already finding innovative ways to develop a highly-skilled AI workforce of the future.

We will learn more about some of those efforts from one of our witnesses today, my good friend, Dr. Sue Ellspermann, President of the Ivy Tech Community College system in our home state of Indiana.

At Ivy Tech, Dr. Ellspermann works to address the changing demands of employers in the Hoosier State by providing strategic support and career planning for students at community colleges and vocational schools and working closely with local industry.

I look forward to hearing more about her important work in our community, and how it can be applied across the country.

Over the next few months, this Committee will be working towards bipartisan legislation to support a national strategy on Artificial Intelligence.

The challenges we must address are how industry, academia, and the government can work together on AI challenges, including today's critical workforce questions, and what role the federal government should play in supporting industry as it drives innovation.

I want to thank our accomplished panel of witnesses for their testimony today.

I look forward to hearing how we can support innovation and education, to ensure a bright future for America's workers and students and maintain our leadership in AI.

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